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Isidore Silver
THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE 1980 ELECTION

ONE DOLLAR
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The family in a time of troubles

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Correspondence

Antidote to silliness

New Brunswick, N.J.

To the Editors: These days, I frequently give up all hope for an intelligent discussion of public issues. David Riesman's essay ["The Overriding Issue"] in the May 23 issue is a marvelous antidote. Even when I disagree with Riesman, I feel elevated: this is someone *worth* disagreeing with, an observer who is not content to push the facts into ideological pigeonholes. He cares about truth more than fashion. With all the silliness that is talked these days, Riesman is as rare as a breath of unpolluted air. And as welcome.

W. CAREY McWILLIAMS

Beyond control

Scarsdale, N.Y.

To the Editors: David Riesman has unimpeachable credentials for prescribing measures to deal with the apocalyptic possibilities of thermonuclear war [May 23]. But I am afraid he adopts a familiar and wrongheaded position from his first sentence: "The overriding issue . . . has been *control* of nuclear weapons."

We have known for a generation that millions will perish along with their civilizations if the great powers go to war with each other. During this same time the stockpiles of nuclear weaponry in both countries have grown into mountains of overkill capability. Efforts at "control" have amounted to striving for parity, nothing more. Nuclear arms have daily become more numerous, more murderous, more versatile, more precise.

Now we Americans face an expenditure for war in the next few years of a trillion dollars or more, much of it in refinements of nuclear bombs, their delivery, and their near cousins, laser weapons.

There is general agreement that we grow less secure at each stage of this demented competition. As the systems grow more complex and topheavy, their vulnerability and fragility increase, and with them the chance of nuclear war.

The object must be elimination, not control. The Non-Proliferation Treaty will remain a farce, more and more nations will obtain nuclear arms, as long as the great powers continue to maintain and add to their own world-breaking arsenals.

No moral justification whatever can be made for the possession, threat, or use of these arms.

The United States can play the noblest role in history by renouncing the use of nuclear weapons and taking the initiative in seeing to their elimination throughout the world, by unilateral example if necessary. The general principle to follow is: Anything is better than thermonuclear war, for the United States and for the world.

We did not try to control yellow fever, plague, smallpox, and other universal threats to mankind. We sought to get rid of them for good. We can scarcely do less about the greatest peril ever to menace the earth.

W. H. FERRY

Berger & human nature

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: Gregory Baum's "The Puzzlement of Peter L. Berger" was eloquent and enlightening [May 9]. Nonetheless he did exaggerate some of Berger's weaknesses and neglect others. Contrary to Baum's claim, Berger has always been critical of American capitalism and its ideologies: the recent *Facing up to Modernity* has plenty to say in this regard. But he has insisted on seeing the positive sides of the social system and the truth in the ideologies and, above all, on seeing the dangerously illusory element in socialist dreams. In this instance, he is responding, perhaps with excessive bite, to a species of orthodoxy in some academic circles. It is a puzzlement that so sharp a commentator as Baum does not perceive the importance of insisting on these points. Where he is easy on Berger, though, is in his remarks on the amorphousness of human nature in his writings. Berger draws many of his principles here from Arnold Gehlen, and they are the foundation of the conservatism of both authors. A theory which makes human nature so amorphous and in need of shaping leaves itself open not only to conservatism, but to authoritarianism. One wonders how to separate it from the practical conclusion of Gehlen in favor of National Socialism. This is clearly not Berger's conclusion, but to avoid it he needs to rework the philosophical basis of both his social thought and his religious thought.

MICHAEL J. KERLIN
Professor of Philosophy,
La Salle College

Group activity

Spring Lake, N.J.

To the Editors: Peter D. Hall's review of *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia* [May 23] was analytical and persuasive, especially to one deeply involved in group rather than elite realities.

For about fifty years law, labor, government and even medicine seem to have been swayed by individuals, for whatever reason, rather than a consensus from group commitment. One counterforce to these "leaders" has evolved which gives hope for better days. This is group activity based on standards higher than personal ambition and glory. Whether it be neighborhood or community action or self-improvement in the manner of A.A. or Gamblers A., they seem to thrive when the life experience of the members and painful individual analysis and thought are substituted for the empty, vacuous, and capsule versions of what is true and equitable from the mouths of others. The memory of the town meeting has faded and strength of conviction based on something other than prag-

(Continued on page 447)

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Contents

Volume CVII, Number 14

Correspondence 418

Editorials 419

Mirror of Italy: *Leo J. Wollemborg* 422

Priests, politics, patriotism: *Abigail McCarthy* 424

To life (patent pending)!: *Frank Getlein* 425

The hidden numbers: *Isidore Silver* 427

Passion play progress: *Leonard Swidler* 428

Family reconstruction: *Jean Bethke Elshtain* 430

The moral meaning of the family: *Stanley Hauerwas* 432

Art: *Maureen Mullarkey* 436

Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 438

Verse: *Jock Henderson, Jr.* 438

Books

The Last Entrepreneurs: *Jack Clark* 440

Gospel Hymns & Social Religion/The Well-Tempered Lyre: *Bruce Cook* 442

The Generation of 1914 *Mark Taylor* 444

Karma Cola/Alternative Altars: *David Steindl-Rast & Francis V. Tiso* 446

Gritty Cities: *Raymond A. Schroth* 447

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THE NUCLEAR CONTAGION

EFFORTS TO PREVENT the proliferation of the Bomb are far from simple. That fact will soon be amply illustrated in the congressional debate over whether the United States should send thirty-eight tons of enriched uranium fuel to India.

In a unanimous decision, the five-man U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted in May to reject the shipment of the uranium. Members of the commission said their ruling was based on the fact that granting a license to export the uranium would be a direct violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 1978. That act forbids the sale of American nuclear fuel and equipment to nations such as India that refuse to accept international safeguards on their nuclear power facilities. Prior to that, the U.S. government in 1963 helped to build India's Tarapur nuclear reactor north of Bombay and agreed to provide the Indian government with fuel for it for thirty years. In May of 1974 Indira Gandhi's government detonated what it called a peaceful nuclear device. U.S. officials then took steps to tighten export policy toward India and other potential nuclear powers, and in 1978 Congress passed the Nonproliferation Act. Since then, Indian authorities have declined to accept the safeguards provided for in the law.

On the face of it, the case against sending more uranium fuel to India would seem very clear. But President Carter has decided to provide India with the desired fuel despite the Indian government's refusal to provide any assurance that it will halt nuclear tests. What the decision means is that Mr. Carter has decided to favor improved political relations with New Delhi over his commitment to curbing the spread of nuclear technology and materials. In the wake of the Soviet drive into Afghanistan and the continued turbulence in Iran and the entire Middle East, the administration reasoning goes, the U.S. can not afford a serious dispute with the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. A similar rationale was given last January for the decision to provide military aid to Pakistan despite that country's apparent attempt to build a nuclear device.

The Carter affirmative decision places the issue squarely in the lap of Congress. There the House and Senate have sixty days in which they can adopt a resolution blocking the sale. Opponents of the Carter decision are said to have a good chance of countermanding his order in the House, less so in the Senate. The debate will be complicated, because even some who oppose nuclear proliferation are nonetheless in favor of supplying India with the uranium, including such highly respected figures as Ambassador Gerard Smith, U.S. Special Representative for Nonproliferation Matters. The nuclear device exploded by India, they say, was not made from U.S. uranium but from plutonium derived from a Canadian-built research reactor, albeit one that used American heavy water. India insists that the U.S. is obligated to continue supplying fuel for its Tarapur reactor under the thirty-year terms of our

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1963 agreement; if shipments are cut off, India would feel free to extract plutonium from the two hundred and fifty tons of uranium we have already given them and use the material to make scores of additional bombs. Truly the United States seems caught between a rock and a hard place.

We sympathize, then, with the members of Congress who have to make this hard decision. We do not envy them their task. If we were asked to decide, however, we know what we would do: cut off the uranium shipment to India. This national decision comes at a time when the United States is making every effort to extend curbs on technology and materials that could be used to make nuclear weapons, and the administration has for months been twisting European arms for that purpose. Behind such efforts is the realization that the number of nations that could acquire the ability to build atomic weapons is steadily growing. Intelligence experts believe that in five years such nations as Taiwan, South Korea, Pakistan, South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina will join the six or seven existing members of the nuclear arms club. Other experts believe that by 1990 Egypt, Libya, Iran, and Iraq could acquire the means to make nuclear weapons. As a recent study pointed out, the projected enormous expansion of nuclear power plants in the industrialized and developing countries in the next twenty years will result in a dramatic, unavoidable increase in available supplies of bomb-grade nuclear material. Safeguards are essential. Given these facts, the U.S. is trying to persuade its nuclear customers to open nuclear facilities to international inspection, and we are trying to get European suppliers to follow our example. If we give in to the demands of India—which has already exploded one nuclear device and refuses international inspection—how can we possibly persuade other nations to accept our safeguards?

EDGES OF LIFE, I

Ethics at the Edges of Life is the apt title of a book by Paul Ramsey. It is also an apt phrase for two statements recently issued by official bodies in the Roman Catholic church. One was the "Declaration on Euthanasia" drawn up by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The other was a brief directive to Catholic hospitals on the question of sterilization; it was issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Both statements can properly be labeled traditional. But there the resemblance ends. In tone, substance, and likely consequences, the two statements offer a study in contrast.

The Declaration on Euthanasia is a welcome document. Its starting point is a society uncertain about fundamental values and troubled by the power of medical technology to prolong life even when such prolongation is of doubtful value or causes increased suffering and sacrifice. Do individuals have "the right to an 'easy death,' which would shorten suffering and which seems to them more in harmony with human dignity"?

What the Declaration reasserts in the face of such questions is a tradition that is firm in its principles yet recognizes complexity and respects individual circumstances. God is

In keeping with its usual summer schedule, the next issue of *Commonweal* will be dated August 29.

sovereign over life; "no one may dispose of it at will." Suicide and "mercy killing" are prohibited. Suffering may have a special Christian meaning, but heroism can be no general rule. Painkillers are a prudent recourse even when they may reduce consciousness or possibly shorten life. As traditionally taught, the individual has a right to refuse "extraordinary" means of medical care, though the Declaration acknowledges the difficulty of interpreting this term in view of rapid developments in medical practice. The final judgment must take into consideration "the type of treatment to be used, its degree of complexity or risk, its cost and the possibilities of using it, and comparing these elements with the result that can be expected, taking into account the state of the sick person and his or her physical and moral resources." "In the final analysis, it pertains to the conscience either of the sick person, or of those qualified to speak in the sick person's name, or of the doctors, to decide."

The Declaration does not speak to a number of the difficult moral and legal issues surrounding the care of the dying. It does not distinguish the rights and obligations that pertain, especially in case of conflict, to different actors—to the dying individual, to the family, to the representative of an incompetent or unconscious patient, to the physician, to the legal institutions, and to the society. Nonetheless, in a general way it restates a moral teaching that responds sensitively to very real problems. Precisely because it is nuanced, this teaching promises to be a much stronger bulwark against the pressures for active euthanasia or "rational suicide" than do the views of some pro-life militants whose concern about the slippery slope of "quality-of-life" judgments leads them, in effect, to endorse the medical technologist's drive to prolong life at any cost. It is puzzling that while many non-religious ethicists have come to admire the wisdom of the church's traditional teaching in this area, many American bishops seem to favor the convergent views of right-to-life amateurs and medical activists over their own time-tested tradition.

The bishops have not hesitated to stick with the traditional position in recently directing Catholic hospitals not to allow sterilization even for the most serious medical reasons—when a future pregnancy would endanger the woman's life, for instance, or would result in a genetically crippled child. In case Catholic couples facing such terrible dangers cannot rely upon natural family planning, they are reminded that they can "forego the genital expression of their love," a solution apparently more in keeping with natural law than sterilization. In insisting on this rigid regulation, the bishops' directive ignores the positions argued by a number of respected Catholic moral theologians and hews to an earlier statement from the Sacred Congregation in Rome. Where the directive rejects the views of these moral theologians is also where it departs from the Declaration on Euthanasia: in a concern for "totality," for the overall welfare, dignity, and rights of the human person caught in anguishing circumstances. Its rigidity is that which over-

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takes traditional Catholic moral teaching almost solely in the area of sex. Unlike the Declaration on Euthanasia it promises to reduce rather than increase respect for traditional teaching. It will create bureaucratic problems for Catholic hospitals, but for most Catholics it will only add to the church's unfortunate loss of credibility in all matters of sexual morals.

EDGES OF LIFE, 2

Another example of trying to apply tradition (this time called precedent) to current reality was the Supreme Court's ruling on the Hyde Amendment. The Court overturned the ruling of District Judge John F. Dooling Jr. that the amendment's ban on Medicaid payments for abortion was a case of unconstitutional unequal treatment. The Court also affirmed, as had Judge Dooling, the point argued extensively in these pages: that the Hyde Amendment did not constitute an establishment of religion. The fact that a statute "happens to coincide or harmonize with the tenets of some or all religions," wrote the Court, does not mean it violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment. "That the Judaeo-Christian religions oppose stealing does not mean that a state or the federal government may not, consistent with the establishment clause, enact laws prohibiting larceny." Unfortunately, Judge Dooling's doubtful conclusion that the Hyde Amendment somehow infringed the free exercise clause of the First Amendment did not get treated so directly: the Court dismissed this argument on the grounds that none of plaintiffs demonstrated that such a free-exercise-of-religion issue had ever been, or ever might be, a factor in their seeking an abortion under Medicaid, and therefore they lacked standing to raise such a question.

The Court's other arguments rested on a sharp distinction between the legally coercive prohibition of abortion by the state and the potentially economically coercive refusal of payment for abortion. In previously declaring a "fundamental liberty" of a woman to a private reproductive decision, the Court insisted that it had only ruled out the former kind of government action. "Although the liberty protected by the due process clause affords protection against unwarranted government interference with freedom of choice in the context of certain personal decisions, it does not confer an entitlement to such funds as may be necessary to realize all the advantages of that freedom. To hold otherwise would mark a drastic change in our understanding of the Constitution. It cannot be that because government may not prohibit the use of contraceptives, or prevent parents from sending their child to a private school, government, therefore, has an affirmative constitutional obligation to ensure that all persons have the financial resources to obtain contraceptives or send their children to private schools." Such a viewpoint "would require Congress to subsidize the medically necessary abortion of an indigent woman even if Congress had not enacted a Medicaid program to subsidize other medically necessary services. Nothing in the due process clause supports such an extraordinary result. Whether freedom of choice that is constitutionally protected warrants federal subsidization is a question for Congress to answer, not a matter of constitutional entitlement."

As for the singling out of abortion among all medically necessary services for a ban on payments, the Court argued that this was "rationally related to a legitimate governmental objective"—namely, the state's "important and legitimate interest in protecting the potentiality of human life." As long as there was this plausible connection, in the matter of payments (as distinct from the matter of outright prohibition) the legislature was free to balance as it saw fit the state's interest in potential life with the woman's interest in privacy or health. "Such decisions are entrusted under the Constitution to Congress, not the courts. . . . It is not the mission of this Court or any other to decide whether the balance of competing interests reflected in the Hyde Amendment is wise social policy."

These arguments do establish a certain line of consistency with the Court's 1973 protection of abortion in *Roe v. Wade*. But one can sympathize with the view of the dissenting justices that in a larger sense the new decision, as Thurgood Marshall wrote, "marks a retreat from *Roe v. Wade*." Unlike the dissenting justices, however, we feel that such a retreat is exactly what is called for, and it is only a shame that it awaited a case involving the wishes of poor women. *Roe v. Wade* offered a construction of the right of privacy that was vague and sweeping. It reduced the state's interest in potential human life to such a subordinate place that one can well understand the dissenting justices' surprise that the latest decision should let so much turn on this point. Finally, *Roe v. Wade* was a drastic judicial circumvention of legislative decision making, whereas the latest decision returns to a traditional hesitance to overrule Congress.

As a piece of social legislation, the Hyde Amendment has troubling aspects. Despite the heated warnings of its opponents, it has *not* led to widespread resort to illegal abortion and consequent injury and death. But it may not serve the purposes of pro-life advocates either, assuming that simply working a hardship on poor women is not one of them. All this demands further discussion. But as for the specifically constitutional aspects of the Amendment, it seems that the Court, in being less faithful to *Roe v. Wade*, has in fact been more faithful to the Constitution.

LOSING A 'NATURAL'

No doubt Daniel Murtaugh's years of teaching English literature prepared him for his part-time editorial position at *Commonweal*. But only a natural gift could explain how superb an editor he proved to be. His judgments of a manuscript's strengths and weaknesses were inevitably precise and

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constructive in a way that usually requires long practice. A number of authors and all of *Commonweal*'s readers are in his debt.

One of the frustrations of operating, as *Commonweal* does, under a financial Damocles sword is our inability to open a full-time position for such a "find." In any case, last month Daniel Murtaugh embarked on a new career in a sleek corporate headquarters, luckily only a few blocks from our own rather Dickensian offices. We're counting on frequent lunches—and perhaps on passing him a few of the tougher manuscripts.

Report from Italy

MIRROR OF ITALY

THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

ACCORDING to the conventional wisdom, Italy is the land of political instability. After World War II, the country has actually had more than forty governments and most of them have been in trouble throughout their precarious tenure. Yet since late 1945 the Christian Democrats have retained control of the premiership as well as of most key Cabinet posts, successfully turning down all challenges to their unity and primacy at the polls.

The keys to this apparent paradox can be found in the nature of the party and in the circumstances attending its rise to power.

The Christian Democrats are in many ways the children or the grandchildren of the Popular party founded in 1919 by Don Luigi Sturzo. The "Popolari," however, quickly withered away after being dumped by the Vatican bent on an accommodation with the Fascist regime. Following Mussolini's downfall, many of the former "Popolari" leaders re-emerged as organizers of the Christian Democratic party, and this time they had the full support of the church and the help of the brightest youngsters trained by the Catholic university groups under the guidance of Monsignor Montini, the future Paul VI. As the split between East and West precipitated a similar cleavage in the Italian political alignment, moreover, millions of voters, who otherwise would have supported the smaller "lay" parties to the right and to the left of center, backed the Christian Democrats as the only effective alternative to the Communist-led "People's Bloc."

Thanks to this polarization, the Christian Democrats polled 48.5 percent of the votes in the 1948 general elections, almost ten percentage points more than their average on subsequent occasions. Such an oversized victory, however, fueled rather than weakened the conflicting pulls and strains within a party which was already a confederation of forces cutting across the fabric of Italian society and including both militantly conservative and earnestly progressive groups. Within the center coalition governments, furthermore, Christian Democratic conservatives tended to outflank the Liberals on the right, while progressive-minded Christian Democrats often outflanked the Social Democrats and the Republicans on the left.

Political stability turned into stagnation. Italy joined the Atlantic alliance and supported European integration. On the domestic front, public order was upheld and basic freedoms were protected. But a great opportunity was lost to attack promptly and vigorously such long-standing problems as tax and land reform, the development of the South and the updating of relations between the state and the citizen. Riding a tide of disappointment and protest, the Communist party (PCI), the Socialists and other opposition groups scored major gains in the 1953 general elections. The Christian Democrats, together with the minor center parties, barely managed to retain control of the national government.

In the following years, Italy went through a strong but disorderly boom, fueled mostly by a steep rise in productivity and a slow increase in wages. Substantial reforms could have been carried out without biting too deeply into vested interests and privileges. The ruling center coalitions, however, continued to be immobilized by the veto power wielded by their conservative wing. By the early 1960s, Italy was well on her way to becoming one of the eight leading industrial nations of the world but still lacked a tax and school systems, an approach to agricultural, energy and labor problems, social services and a public administration geared to the requirements of twentieth century society. When most Christian Democrats agreed at last to form a center-left government with the Socialists, the boom had sapped its own strength leaving the national economy exposed to wild swings of the business cycle. This largely explains why the center-left governments made so little progress in implementing their own pledges of social and institutional modernization and why the Italian economy has yet to emerge from a pattern of runaway inflation and recession.

Under the circumstances, it was hardly surprising that Italy should get more than her share of the labor and student unrest, of the social and political tensions, of the revolt against "the system," of the wave of "permissiveness" and of the outbreaks of political and criminal violence, which have characterized the last decade in so many Western countries. The storm was bound to hit the Christian Democrats most forcefully since they were the mainstay of the establishment and widely regarded as the embodiment of its most resented aspects (patronage, corruption, inefficiency, abuses of power, arrogance, or neglect toward popular pressure for change). Nor was it surprising that the PCI, as the major opposition party, should be in a position to be the main beneficiary. To be sure, far left radicals branded the PCI itself as part of the establishment; but a Communist party, which remained strong and disciplined while apparently willing to shed or tone down its dogmatic approach to domestic and foreign affairs, could appeal even to moderate voters yearning for "law and order" and for less graft and more efficiency in the public administration. A governmental role for the PCI was strongly promoted, moreover, by influential sectors of the media which had been carefully cultivated and "colonized" by the Communists and

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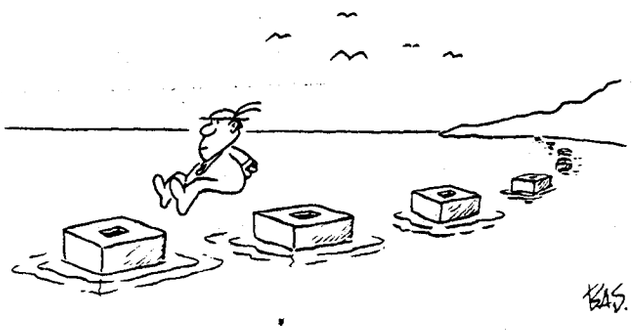
only too often taken for granted or snubbed by the Christian Democrats.

In May 1974, a referendum to repeal a recent law introducing a limited form of divorce turned into a stunning defeat for the Christian Democrats (and for the Catholic church). In the local elections of June 1975, the Christian Democrats lost heavily, retaining only a two percent margin over the surging PCI which got more than 33 percent of the votes. Quite a few Italian and foreign observers concluded that the Christian Democratic party was about to disintegrate and in any case would be soon replaced by the PCI as the major political force in Italy. Those observers badly underestimated the Christian Democrats' resiliency as well as the strongly negative reactions that the prospect of a Communist hegemony still arouses in many Italians.

In the 1976 general elections, polarization was again at work and the Christian Democrats widened further their lead over the PCI as their share of the popular vote rose again over 38 percent mostly at the expense of the minor center parties. The latter's resentful refusal to participate in a governmental coalition forced the Christian Democrats to deal with the PCI, but they were able to do so from a position of relative strength. The Communists' demands for Cabinet posts were rejected and their pressure for more influence in national affairs was contained. Most of the measures agreed upon when the PCI gave its support to an all-Christian-Democratic government were blocked or watered down. In short, it was the Communists' turn to experience the effects of the Christian Democrats' favorite tactics—rubber-walling.

By early 1979 the PCI leaders, increasingly frustrated by being cast in a role which involved most of the burdens and very few of the benefits of sharing in a governmental coalition, took their party back into the opposition. But it was late in the game: in the 1979 general elections, the PCI suffered its first major defeat as its share of the popular vote dropped back to just over 30 percent. The Christian Democrats retained the support of 38 percent, even though quite a few voters, no longer haunted by the nightmare of an impending Communist victory, switched back to the smaller democratic parties.

This switch was again apparent in the local elections held this June in most parts of Italy, while the PCI failed to recoup its recent losses and the Socialists polled 13 percent of the votes for their best performance since the early 1960s. Within the Christian Democratic camp, the balance of power has now swung again in favor of the factions which rule out any deal with the Communists and seek closer relations with the party's traditional allies. As a result, for the first time in five years, the government is again a center-left coalition which includes the Socialists, while the PCI stays in the opposition and may be confronted again with the threat of political isolation.



The record shows only too clearly that the Christian Democrats are fairly good at avoiding the worst but pretty bad when it comes to preparing the better. Most of all, their mismanagement of national affairs and resources has bolstered the Communists' main claim: "Without us, let alone against us, Italy cannot be governed honestly and efficiently." Even some of the Christian Democrats' major achievements have been marred by their shortcomings and mistakes. For instance, they have played a key role in making and keeping Italy a loyal partner of NATO. Yet, their domestic policies (and some errors by American diplomacy) have tended to identify the U.S. and the Atlantic alliance with an outdated social and economic status quo in Italy itself.

On the other hand, some of the Christian Democrats' negative features have revealed more than a silver lining. For instance, the jelly-like consistency of the party, while frustrating the efforts to give it an effective organization or to prod it into timely decisions and choices, has enabled the Christian Democrats to cling to, and mirror for so long so many facets of the diversified Italian society as well as to prove impervious to significant splits. Complete failure has been the lot of those Catholic activists who, out of frustrated ambition and/or intellectual arrogance, have moved into the Communist camp and have tried to use the media controlled or influenced by the PCI to appeal for defections from the Christian Democratic ranks.

Recent events have proved that the Communist drive for national power is not irresistible and that the Christian Democrats are not caught in an irreversible crisis. Yet, over the last thirty years or so the Christian Democrats have suffered a major loss of image and some electoral erosion (at least in the major urban areas of Northern and Central Italy), while the PCI has increased significantly its votes and its influence.

The revived governmental alliance with the Socialist party, whose young leadership is committed to a reform-minded and pro-Western course, provides the Christian Democrats with another opportunity to promote a more balanced economic growth and to translate its benefits into adequate social and civic progress and thus at last to put Italian democratic institutions on a wider and more solid foundation of popular support. But how many more such opportunities can the Christian Democrats (and the country) afford to waste—especially when Italy's position and role in the Mediterranean and toward the Balkans and the Middle East are taking on additional significance within an international framework featured by a shift of the balance of power to the benefit of the Soviet Union and by a declining confidence in the U.S. leadership?

LEO J. WOLLEMBORG

(Leo J. Wollemborg, a previous contributor, has covered Italian affairs since the late 1940s for several U.S. dailies and magazines, notably the Washington Post *and most recently the* Philadelphia Bulletin.*)*

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Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

'CONSECRATED BLIZZARD'

PRIESTS, POLITICS, PATRIOTISM

HE WAS a great priest. He was a great American. When he lay dying in his eighties, the president of the United States wrote to him, and it is worth remembering that it was at a time when presidents wrote their own letters — "I don't know whether you will be able to read this, but at least I hope that whoever does read it, will tell you that I have written. You are one of our really great American figures. This country owes you very much . . . you have been one of the greatest influences for good in our American life."

He was an international celebrity. During one of his visits to Europe — almost a triumphal progress from Rome and Milan through Paris, Brussels, and Orleans to London — he was welcomed by the following in a London paper:

> We find the ideality of Dante combined with the eloquence and political energy of Savanorola . . . Rome, Paris, London and Brussels have tendered him the homage of their deepest respect and admiration. Kings and Presidents have paid him court. The highest representatives of Church and State, the world's aristocracy of rank and intellect have hung upon his lips whether he has spoken in private conference or at a great public demonstration such as the recent centenary at Orleans.

En route home he gave two lectures on board ship on "The Duty of Capital and Labor." On arrival in New York he told a press conference how he was going to vote in the forthcoming presidential election: "In giving my vote for the candidates of the Republican party, I am satisfied in my own conscience that I serve the best interest of the country at home and abroad, that I contribute to the maintenance of the country's material prosperity and of peace and good will . . . that I aid the country in bringing about the safest and most honorable solutions of the complex problems which confront it . . . I trust no further doubts will be expressed as to how I intend to vote."

He was unabashedly partisan because he saw party politics as an extension of responsible citizenship. In a time when it was almost an article of faith to hold that the best government was that in which the Catholic church was the established or favored church, he was unabashedly sure that the healthiest climate for the church was a democracy like our own in which the church was free of civil interference. He insisted that the church take part in the life of the age — that the priest must live in the present, "unregretful of the past." He justified the right of the churchman to take part in political controversy whenever questions of moral issue, social order, the prosperity of the people, the integrity of the nation and the honor of the community were involved. Brilliant, dynamic, opinionated, fearless, controversial, sometimes wrong-headed, unswervingly loyal to both country and church, called "the consecrated blizzard of the Northwest," Archbishop John Ireland fought many a battle from which the church in America benefits today. He was more than once in trouble in Rome, but it is hard to think of a bishop today who has such towering influence there and in the rest of the world. Reflection on his career gives us perspective on the current discussion of priests and politics.

It would probably never have occurred to him that priests should run for office. The question in his time was whether they should be involved in the affairs of the nation at all. There was a strong body of opinion in Rome that, in a state which was not by definition Catholic, Catholics should hold themselves aloof — to the detriment of both church and state — as in France, for example. Archbishop Ireland held that as citizens priests had responsibilities as well as rights and were blessed in having them. He was a champion of universal education and believed that the state had the right to establish schools and compel the attendance of children at some school, and he praised the offering of gratuitous instruction to all irrespective of condition of life. For that his orthodoxy was questioned. (We forget that education for everyone has been far from the norm in so-called Catholic countries.) He wanted an educated laity which could take full part in the affairs of the nation; if asked or if the question had arisen, he would probably have thought public office belonged to them.

But he was very clear that priests had an obligation to be involved in questions of justice. Largely because of his efforts (although the actual action in Rome was taken by Cardinal Gibbons with whom he was often hand in glove) the Vatican was persuaded not to condemn the Knights of Labor (predecessor of today's unions) at a time when working men's associations were being condemned in Europe. A plea on behalf of organized labor was presented in Rome in the form of a memorial which Ireland and Bishop Keane of Dubuque helped Gibbons write. If the Knights were to be condemned, they said, the church would forfeit its right to be considered the friend of the workingman and of all who seek justice for him. Without organization they had no means of securing the just rights of the workers. The Knights were not condemned and the condemnation in Canada was rescinded. And the workers of America, unlike the workers of Europe, were not lost to the church. It is hard to imagine what the ramifications of that one political act — for it was a *political* act — have been for life in this country.

He was almost alone in his insistence on the rights of blacks and preached on that subject not only in Minnesota where it was hardly a burning question, but in Washington, where it was. "No church is a fit temple of God where a man because of his color is made to occupy a corner," he said there in 1890. (Ushers

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in Catholic churches in that city were still trying to relegate blacks to back pews and galleries sixty years later, alas.)

> "There is but one solution . . . and it is to obliterate absolutely all color line . . . Open up to the negro as to the white man the political offices of the country, making but one test, that of mental and moral fitness. Throw down at once the barriers which close out the negro merely on account of his color from hotel, theater and railway carriage. Meet your negro brother as your equal at banquets and social gatherings. Give him in one word . . . equal rights and equal privileges, political, civil, and social."

He would have been astounded to know how long it took before his vision became at least partial reality.

But the struggle of his life — and the one most relevant to the struggles in the church today — was for what we today might call the *enculturation* of the church in America. He insisted that it could not flourish as a missionary extension of the church in Europe, dependent forever on foreign bishops administering national parishes and parochial schools, dependent on missionary religious orders for higher education. He fought for the establishment of Catholic University so that the diocesan clergy might have access to graduate education in theology and philosophy, and that a high standard of scholarship be established as a norm for the Catholics in America. (It goes without saying that although his dream was never fully realized, it showed his vision.) He established the first seminary with a faculty of diocesan clergy.

What brought him the most enemies and probably cost him the cardinal's hat was his central position in the long effort to prevent the church in America and, as his biographer put it, "the Republic itself" from becoming a loosely-knit aggregation of nationalities each preserving "its racial characteristics and mother tongue." That struggle is, as we know, not yet over — and there are reasons for it — but in Ireland's time the effort of proponents of national groups to live independently of American bishops was posited on the idea that democratic institutions were hostile to Catholicism — an idea hotly denied by John Ireland. He was accused of the heresy of "Americanism" and beat back the accusation. But the virus of the idea lingered. It is ironic that he was anathema to the Jesuits of his time. It was not Archbishop Ireland's fault that John Courtney Murray, S.J., had to be defended against similar accusations in the 1950s and that Robert Drinan, S.J., must leave office in the '80s.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

TO LIFE (PATENT PENDING)!

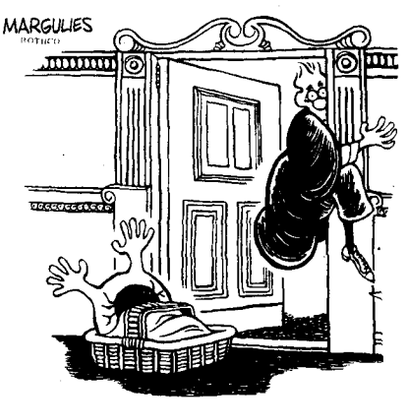
RICHARD NIXON ON THE SISTINE CEILING

IT CERTAINLY came as no surprise to me that the Nixon Supreme Court would and did find that new forms of life are patentable. That Court has written itself a coherent and consistent record of support for property rights over life rights. The logical, inevitable, apex of that structure is a decision turning life itself into private property. It was only a question of time.

The decision was also tipped—if tipping were needed—by the fact that the appellant was an employee of General Electric, had been when he did the God-number, and hence had signed away the proceeds to the corporation. If some wild-eyed professor working in basement solitude had turned the trick, there's no telling how the Court might have come down. Conceivably it might have rejected his plea, lectured him sternly on the sacredness of life and closed up shop for the summer. Happily, this was no wild-eyed loner, but the Giant Corporation itself. If Supreme Courts in general may be said to follow the election returns, the Nixon Court may be said to follow the dividend returns and on that standard GE has been exemplary.

The considerations above are all more or less ideological, if that's not too grand a word for the *Poor Richard's Almanac* philosophy that seems to inform the Court on so much. As you might expect, there is a personal consideration as well and, as is usual with the Unindicted Co-conspirator, that consideration goes straight to the cash nexus. Richard Nixon stands to make more money out of the Supreme Court's allowing patents for new forms of life than even General Electric, at least in the short run; in the long run, of course, the corporation is a new life-form itself, having by law from birth the gift of eternal life so many humans have dedicated their whole lives to achieving and having it in this world; in that span GE will certainly come out ahead of RMN, but in the foreseeables, it's Nixon two to one, or more.

Take Henry Kissinger alone—not the best way to take him, but still. This assuredly was a form of life that didn't exist before it was created by Richard Nixon and, like the oil-eating microbe, it has demonstrated an enormous power to earn money, all of which belongs by property right to Nixon, its inventor. It is true the cloud of copyright infringement hangs over the potential Kissinger gold mine. There is certainly no doubt that Nixon did indeed invent Kissinger in his manifestation as born-again Metternich, eavesdropping on the offices of his associates



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and bombing the lesser breeds without the law. But there seem to be valid claims by both James Reston of the *Times* and Barbara Walters of various television networks, that one or both of them invented Kissinger not as bomber and eavesdropper, but as font of wisdom on the one hand and glamoroso secret swinger on the other. To complicate matters further, the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci can stake out a unique claim to having invented Kissinger as the lonesome cowboy. Still, only a rancher singularly insouciant about his stock would sign up Kissinger as a lonesome cowboy, while NBC already has him on the payroll as font of wisdom and Chase Manhattan has him on its own as secret swinger—at least that's what one must assume, Kissinger himself having no record of any kind at all as a famous economist or financial advisor and secret swinging being a well-established Rockefeller propensity.

Well, it's a case for the lawyers and that alone enhances the money-making potential of the new form of life.

Or consider the musclemen, Haldeman, Erlichman, and Colson. Yes, there had been thugs in government before. The Renaissance called them *bravos* and I suppose Cesare Borgia was the highest placed of the breed before the Katzenjammer Kids and their apprentice tough, Colson. But Cesare had a certain style. It's evident in everything we know about the man, from the personal bull-fighting in St. Peter's Square to the fact that he inspired Machiavelli and was played in the movies by Orson Welles. Can you really see Welles doing Erlichman? The meat just isn't there, not even ham. So there was a new form of life in the trio, certainly in the history of American governments. Nixon is clearly the creator of it and entitled to all the royalties the Kids have collected and to whatever may be left of the sums born-again Colson has been getting from the gullible for the salvation of souls in prison.

Can Nixon legitimately claim to be the only begetter of Al Haig? If so, that life form could be extremely lucrative. The rest of the gang, including Nixon himself, have mostly gone into authorship, exhibiting themselves as freaks for pay. This is good while it lasts, but they were all involved, really, in only one big swindle, the Watergate complex of burglary, conspiracy, perjury and assorted other crimes and misdemeanors. That's their capital and once they've blown it, it's gone. The latest crook book, the one by Gordon Liddy, is reduced to retailing the author's imaginary crimes, preparing himself to murder Hunt, for instance, on orders that never got through, planning to erect Babylon in Miami—talk about redundancy—on similar orders that never made it. Even Spiro Agnew, who was really the only old pro in the crowd, except Nixon, had been into being a crook for years in the traditional small-time pol sense, wrote, most recently, a kind of reverse of the Liddy book, reciting his own fears of being rubbed out by Nixon agents, presumably Liddy. (Actually, Agnew needn't have worried: the record suggests that being marked for destruction by Gordon Liddy was one of the safest things that could happen to anyone.) But the point here is that you can't keep yelling, Look at me, I'm a freak, and draw the rubes forever. There are too many other things on the midway.

Haig, however, having parlayed his way from lieutenant-colonel, his penultimate command position, direct to captain-general of the free world, his last, by the way of being factotum, dog-robber and all-around body-servant to Nixon's factotum, dog-robber and all-around body-servant, Kissinger, has more recently parlayed the captain-generalcy into top corporate bucks of the kind respected by the Supreme Court. If Nixon can lay claim to them bucks, his troubles will be over, there'll be no more worries about what will be the outcome if the income don't come in as the crooks run dry with their books. Good old Al will be bringing in the corporate buckerinos, with stock options, perks and other under the table baksheesh and it will all belong to Nixon.

The claim is clear. Haig was the understrapper's understrapper and Nixon was the man in need of understrapping. American military history has been a curious affair often enough, never more so than in the last thirty years, but the kind of long leap upward accomplished by Haig with no command at all between battalion level and global level has never been accomplished by anyone. He is thus a new form of life and the credit can only go to Nixon. A claim can be put forward by Kissinger, but is instantly disposed of on the principle that, the agent of my agent is my agent. If Nixon invented Kissinger and Kissinger invented Haig, then Nixon invented Haig, a classical syllogism in the hypothetical mood.

There is, of course, a deeper shadow over all these golden prospects than the one with Barbara Walters and James Reston disputing Nixon's claim to all rights in Henry Kissinger's money-making as a result of his strenuous understrapping for Nixon. This can be seen as if in a lightning flash when you ask the question, Who invented Nixon?

It's the most portentous question of its kind since, What immortal hand or eye/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry? and, Did He Who made the Lamb make Thee?

There is only one reasonable answer and that has to be Alger Hiss. When last heard from, Hiss, destroyed by Nixon in his Haig-like climb to the top, was selling stationery and office supplies on a very small scale. If he could bring a successful suit to establish the claim that he had invented Nixon and that therefore all the Nixonian perks and pelf belonged to him, a lot of people, including myself, would feel a lot better about life. The claim is that, simply, had there not been a Hiss, there could not have been a Nixon—in the sense at which we marvel. Without Hiss, Nixon would have been a kind of third-rate Robert Dole, who is already a third-rate Nixon. Hiss made the man. It's a sound claim and it should take about fifteen minutes to establish the fact that there has never been anything like Richard Nixon in American politics, hence he is an authentic new life-form. And Hiss owns him.

Alas, no. Hiss did not invent Nixon in the way that Nixon did invent Kissinger and Haig. Hiss was merely the occasion. Had it not been Hiss, it would have been another. Old Jaws was hanging there, waiting, he seen his chances and he took 'em, including Hiss. He owns the ball game.

FRANK GETLEIN

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The hidden numbers

ISIDORE SILVER

THE ELECTION of 1980 is a landmark election—because of the numbers. The relevant numbers are 74, 72 (three times), 71, and perhaps 65 and 63, the ages of seven present members of the Supreme Court. Since the average age of retirement or death while in service of the ninety-two Supreme Court Justices who have served throughout our national history (apart from the present nine) is 68, it is likely that the next president will have a major opportunity to reshape the court in a way not seen since 1908 or 1920. Clearly if Ronald Reagan is elected *and* re-elected, for instance, it is virtually certain that he will appoint at least six Justices. Ironically, while everyone talks of Reagan's age (often by not talking of it), few think about the implications of a "Reagan Court" making social policy well into the next century.

How likely is it that the next president—whoever he is—will actually have the opportunity described above? After all, Justices die or retire at different ages, and some may "hang on" (as Earl Warren tried to do twelve years ago) until assured that a successor will be chosen by the "right" president. The answer seems clear. Five Justices will reach their 75th birthdays within the next four years and a sixth, Justice Stewart, will be just about 70. While some titans have served until 90 (Oliver Wendell Holmes) or 85 (Hugo Black), they are rare when compared with the host of compatriots who have retired in their early and mid-70s. Moreover, the "timing" of a resignation for political (or assumed political) purposes has recently been regarded with distaste, so that we can assume that most Justices will choose to retire when they feel it to be necessary. It may be surprising to realize that the average retirement age of twentieth century Justices is 69, exactly the same age as their nineteenth century compatriots, despite presumed advances in longevity.

It is true that we should not be misled by "averages" since they tend to reveal little about the specific characteristics of the "population" studied. In the case of Supreme Court Justices, "averages" are skewed by early resignations (John Jay at 50, Arthur Goldberg at 57) to pursue other careers or, at the other end, by those who persistently refuse to resign because of pride, fear, or other strong emotional reasons for remaining in the seat of power. Yet, because of the fact that skewing operates in both directions, it may be true that "average" may well be useful for assessing the age at which problems of performance and productivity arise. Perhaps a more sophisticated data base would tell us something more about the relationship of "productive age" to "average retirement age," but it would suffice for the moment to note that the two may differ only by a few years. Thus, the five present Justices over 72 would certainly be within what might be called a range of probable retirement age. Even Justice Stewart, who is not yet 70, but who has served for 22 years, may be or soon become tired or bored.

There are significant and interesting parallels between 1908 and 1980 (apart from the reversal of numbers). William Howard Taft was elected president in 1908 and, in his one term (his only term) had the opportunity to appoint six Justices. That opportunity arose, in part, because four Justices were over 70. Taft actually made five appointments (in one additional case, he shifted a sitting Associate Justice to the Chief Justiceship when that position became vacant), and his influence dominated the Court for several decades, including the early New Deal.

Indeed, the historical parallels are discomforting. In addition to the five Justices he appointed as president, Taft influenced the appointment of another four (including himself) under Warren Harding's abortive presidency. Thus, two Republicans, serving a total of six years, appointed ten Justices, three of whom served into the New Deal—and formed the crux of the opposition to fundamental political reform of the nation. In contrast, Woodrow Wilson, a two-term president, only had the opportunity to appoint three Justices, two of whom served into the New Deal. In all fairness, it must be noted that one of the most implacable reactionaries was a Wilson appointee (the other was Louis Brandeis). Also, F.D.R. had to wait for one presidential term to expire before *he* could start making Supreme Court appointments to break the Taft-Harding axis which represented a discredited legal and political philosophy. The replication of the Taft-Harding "sandwich" in the form of Nixon-Reagan—who between them may be responsible for nine or ten appointments to the Court—may yet occur.

PARALLELS aside, it has been fashionable for liberal historians, commencing with Arthur Schlesinger in 1960, to argue that there really *is* a difference between Democrats and Republicans. Many have argued, today, that there will be little to choose from between Carter and Reagan, just as differences

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between Kennedy-Nixon in 1960 and Johnson-Goldwater in 1964 and Humphrey-Nixon in 1968 were perceived as being meaningless. Ironically, it appears that the greatest distinctions lie precisely in the realm of judicial appointments rather than in the world of politics. For some reason yet to be established, the general records of Democrats seem to be better, or at least different, ideologically different, in the realm of judicial appointment. In 1980, that difference promises to take on critical dimensions.

While it might be difficult to forecast what types of judicial appointments (especially Supreme Court ones) might be made by Reagan, a pattern of potential Carter appointments can be discerned. Carter has appointed more women and blacks, highly qualified women and blacks, than any predecessors, and one scholar recently called their credentials "even more distinguished than the overall credentials of the white males chosen by Carter and previous administrations." While Carter continues to appoint Democrats, for the most part they are able Democrats.

In contrast, the Republicans in general have had not one but two traditions. What might be called the Hoover-Eisenhower-Ford tradition has stressed appointment of men fundamentally conservative but with open minds. Herbert Hoover chose Benjamin Cardozo in 1932 because Cardozo was the most eminent judge in the nation; the fact that the appointee was a liberal, a Jew (and would be the second one

PASSION PLAY PROGRESS

ANOTHER VIEW ON OBERAMMERGAU

LEONARD SWIDLER

IN ITS JULY 4, 1980 issue *Commonweal* gave the 1980 Oberammergau Passion Play the fireworks, quoting the American Jewish Committee's judgment that it is "undoubtedly one of the most anti-Semitic presentations shown anywhere." In fact, there are other Jewish observers and organizations, as well as Catholic ones, who hold a significantly different view of the Oberammergau Passion Play, present and future. As one Catholic theologian who has worked closely with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith in attempting to eliminate anti-Semitic elements in the Oberammergau Passion Play, I would like to present one of those different views.

A little historical background is in order. In 1632 the village of Oberammergau, in the midst of the Alps, an hour's drive south of Munich, pledged to perform a Passion Play every ten years in gratitude for being spared the ravages of the plague then rampant throughout Germany. The villagers have kept that pledge ever since. After the destruction of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and after the Vatican II decree on the Jews in 1965, the question was raised as to whether the Oberammergau Passion Play contained anti-Semitic elements or not. A reading of the text provided a quick affirmative answer. Serious efforts were made by Jewish organizations and others to have the anti-Semitic portions of the play eliminated in the 1970 production—but to little avail. An uncompromising position against any changes was taken by the Oberammergau leadership and villagers.

During the 1960s and 1970s certain groups among the villagers began to work for a radically new text and production, and eventually they reached back to a 1750 text by Ferdinand Rosner which they revised. The reasons for this "reform" movement had nothing to do with the anti-Semitism question—that matter became somewhat important only relatively recently when some Jews and at least one Jewish organization, the American Jewish Committee, decided that in regard to anti-Semitism, the Rosner text was considerably better than the currently used nineteenth century text by Alois Daisenberger. As a consequence the AJC endorsed the Rosner text also advocated by the "reformers" of the village.

The agitation for the adoption of the Rosner or Daisenberger text for the 1980 production was most intense in the late 1970s. It involved an experimental production of the Rosner text in 1970 (at the cost of 1.5 million marks to the village!) and culminating in a 1978 village election that produced a seventy-five percent majority in favor of the Daisenberger text. The ADL, which was also actively working to eliminate anti-Semitism from the Oberammergau Passion Play, decided that whatever text the villagers chose to use, the ADL would try to make sure it was free of anti-Semitism.

In 1977 when Theodore Freedman and Nat Kaminey of the ADL met with the Oberammergau leadership (including the present Mayor Zwink), they encountered a very resistant attitude. By 1978 they gained acceptance of their suggestion that an analysis of the newly reaffirmed Daisenberger text for anti-Semitic elements be undertaken by Catholic scholars. Having been approached by the ADL, Gerard Sloyan and I undertook the analysis, which both uncovered significant anti-Semitic elements and offered line-by-line suggestions on eliminating them. The analysis was then translated into German and along with supportive materials was published as a book (*A Commentary on the Oberammergau Passionsspiel in Regard to Its Image of Jews and Judaism*, New York; ADL, 1978) and sent to Oberammergau. It clearly played a major role in the work of the Oberammergau text revision committee.

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ever appointed and would sit along with Brandeis, the first, who was still on the Court) seemed to be irrelevant. Hoover also picked Charles Evans Hughes, a "reform" Republican to be Chief Justice in 1930. Among Eisenhower's choices were, of course, Earl Warren, a "progressive" former Governor of California, the scholarly John Marshall Harlan, an independent Wall Street lawyer, and William Brennan, an independent liberal Catholic Democrat. Ford's appointment of John Paul Stevens a few years ago was well within this tradition. The contrasting Taft-Harding-Nixon pattern is too painful to comment on (although, in the case of the latter, Senate Democratic opposition insured that a modicum of quality replaced outright mediocrity as the selection touchstone).

Elections often turn out to be less significant than they seem at the time, but the 1980 vote is likely to be a silent referendum about the future composition of the Supreme Court, an always important (if subterranean) issue in our society. As with the Taft and Harding triumphs in 1908 and 1920, the final meaning will lie in a realm quite different from that publicly debated at the time. If history is to repeat itself (it never quite does) and a Republican is to become president, one can only hope that he will opt for continuance not of the Republican Taft-Harding-Nixon pattern but of the independent Hoover-Eisenhower-Ford tradition of judicial selection, one which has proven itself compatible with the visionary, broadly humanitarian role we have come to expect of the Supreme Court in our society.

In June 1979, the revised text was ready, and I had a chance at Oberammergau to go over it carefully both by myself and in consultation with Father Gregor Ruemelein, OSB, of nearby Ettal Abbey, who obviously is the guiding spirit behind the revisions the committee undertook. At least eighty percent of our suggested revisions or cuttings had been accepted. I had the impression that if it had been entirely up to Father Gregor, one hundred percent would have been accepted. Mayor Zwink likewise showed himself very genial.

Although huge progress had been made, there was still the twenty percent left undone. For example, Pilate still looked too much like a defender of justice (from historical documents we know he was a brutal opportunist), making the Jewish leadership appear more responsible for the death of Jesus than in fact they were. Jesus and his supporters still do not come across as sufficiently Jewish to make it obvious to all that the struggle around Jesus's life and death was a totally inner-Jewish struggle—not one between Christians (good) and Jews (bad). It is largely around these two main points that the work yet to be done circles.

Ironically even a little progress was made in this latter area at the last moment, but went unnoticed by all the English-speaking playgoers. One of the suggestions I had made to make Jesus appear more authentically Jewish was to have him addressed in the play as "Rabbi," as he was in real life. The suggestion was not taken up in the June 1979 revised text. However, in the May 18, 1980 text, Judas addresses Jesus not as "Meister," as the earlier text had it, but as, "Rabbi, sei gegruesst!" The irony in this last-minute improvement is that the English text translation had gone to press earlier and so the English-speaking public reads there: "Hail, Master!"

But basically there were no major surprises, pro or con, between the June 1979 revised text and the premiere performance on May 18, 1980. As the ADL noted in a brochure of "Guidelines for the Oberammergau Passionsspiel and other Passion Plays," composed this spring (available *gratis* from The Interfaith Affairs Department, ADL, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017): "In the case of the 1980 script, important steps have been taken to remove much of the old discredited anti-Semitism. But additional materials of a positive nature still need to be included. We commend those responsible for the improvements in the 1980 Oberammergau script, and we urge them to consider additional steps."

On May 19, 1980, after seeing the premiere on May 18, Nat Kaminey, Theodore Freedman and I visited Mayor Zwink. He was extremely cordial. When, after congratulating him on the improvements already made in the script and production, we pointed out a number of other improvements we would like to see in the future, he was most forthcoming in his response. He asked that we give him a written description of those and all other suggested changes so that they might be utilized in further revisions for the 1984 production—a special year since it will be the 350th anniversary of the first performance. There is no doubt in my mind but that Mayor Zwink was very serious about that request (it is recorded on television) and that he means to follow through on it.

We also met the next day with Father Gregor, who, if possible, was even more accommodating. He not only readily agreed that Jesus should be addressed as "Rabbi" not once in the play but regularly; he also added that Jesus should be referred to not in the Greek terms Christ or Jesus, but by his Jewish name, "Jeshua," as he was addressed in real life.

From my notes on May 19, I find that Nat Kaminey remarked that the ADL had been working with the Oberammergau leadership since 1977 and that he was convinced they were serious in their desire to have done with all anti-Semitism, even unconscious, in their play. Also from my notes, I see that Theodore Freedman said he was satisfied significant progress had been made in the 1980 text and production and that he looked forward to cooperating with Mayor Zwink and Father Gregor in the still further improvement of the 1984 production.

This is the breakthrough: from a stonewall attitude in 1977 to significant improvement in '80 and a willingness—better, eagerness—to complete the job in 1984.

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THE FAMILY IN A TIME OF TROUBLES—I

Family reconstruction

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

IT HAS BECOME a truism of our time that the contemporary family or, more accurately, contemporary families are under enormous social, economic, and ideological pressures. The family has frequently been singled out by certain segments within the feminist movement as *the* institution most deeply implicated in the oppression of women. Christopher Lasch, on the other hand, laments the breakdown of traditional modes of family authority and cites that breakdown as a key factor in the emergence of the "new narcissism in America." The Carnegie Council on Children criticizes, and calls for reform of, those institutions which sap the self-esteem and power of parents. Specifically, they, and French social theorist Jacques Donzelot in his recent book, *The Policing of Families*, (Pantheon) are concerned with moves by the state and bureaucracies to further rationalize all dimensions of social life, including the family, in accordance with the imperatives of a capitalist or state socialist political economy. Inflationary pressures bear heavily on families and are the single factor which most fully accounts for that dramatic upheaval represented by the rise of the numbers of working women: most women work because they have no choice and at low-paying, dead-end jobs. The Carnegie Council estimates that one-fourth to one-third of all American children are born into families with financial strains so great children suffer basic deprivation, with 12-15 percent of these families falling below the United States government's official poverty line.

External pressures on the family and inner changes in family life—the "sexual revolution," alterations in intimacy, in the very touchstone of male-female relations—have increased tension between men and women even as they have opened up new possibilities for authentic reciprocity. Men and women alike are experiencing identity shifts and lacunae that are profoundly disorienting. On the question of the family—"love it or leave it"—women have been, and are, bitterly divided along class, ethnic, religious, and ideological lines. All of this adds up to what social theorist Jurgen Habermas has called a "legitimate crisis," the widespread draining of our social institutions, public and private, of their previous normative meaning and significance.

How do we, as social critics devoted to some ideal of family life, respond to these various and relentless pressures from all sides as well as "inside"? I see three basic responses to the pressures I have sketched briefly. The first is *family retrenchment*, a kind of family chauvinist movement, an attempt to reproduce a very traditional notion of the patriarchal family. One can envisage this response as a reactive-passive vector. Those caught up in familial retrenchment seek, often rather desperately, sometimes merely wistfully, to "turn back the clock" to some imagined good old days when men were men, women knew their place, children kept their place, and all was well. Individuals in the grips of family retrenchment react to events swirling about them by withdrawing into a militant reaffirmation that is indistinguishable in practice from a form of passive resignation. It's as if such persons were saying: "This is too much for me. I shall pretend I can make all these 'evils' go away by retreating within my four walls and embracing the bygone days of order, authority, and paternalism."

The second response, *family deconstruction*, is also a troubling one. It involves the notion that "progress" of some sort or another demands that we replace the family with other kinds of more efficient or less "destructive" ways of raising children, perhaps by turning them over to beneficent people trained for that very purpose. This response sometimes calls itself radical but it is in a deep sense nihilistic. One example of dangerous "deconstruction" in the absence of viable functional alternatives to the family may be found in Shulamith Firestone's radical feminist "classic," *The Dialectic of Sex*. Firestone depicts a social world of stark lovelessness in which pervasive force, coercion, manipulation and crude power roam undifferentiatedly over the landscape, suffusing society unto its innermost parts. The family, she argues, is in its essence a political institution, pervaded by the domination of the "female sex-class" by the "male sex-class" and serves as the key linchpin in a larger world order seen as a "total male power structure." Women must either destroy this world utterly or, according to another radical feminist, Susan Brownmiller, occupy the power structure in sufficient numbers to achieve a stalemate in the next war. In either case, the family collapses or is smashed. In Firestone's scenario for the future, test-tube babies will replace biological reproduction

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and every aspect of life will rest in the beneficent hands of a "new elite of engineers, cybernetricians." Although most statements of the family deconstruction option are not so extreme, they all share the presumption that the contemporary family is a thoroughly debased and hopeless institution and must be utterly eradicated or entirely transcended.

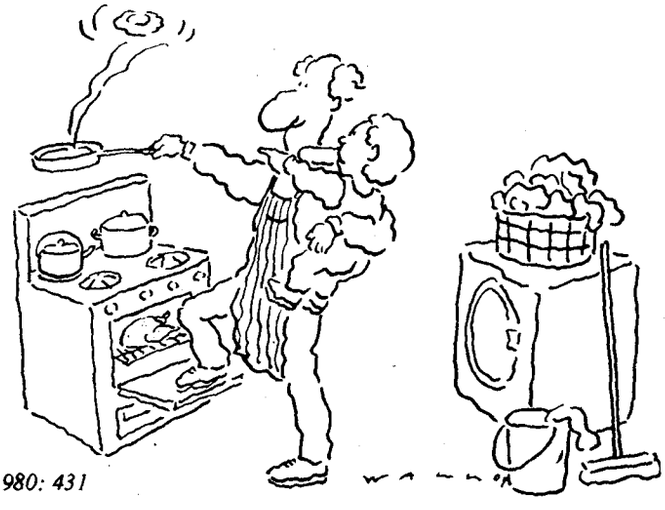
The deconstruction mode, a reactive-active stance, winds up covertly buttressing that mode with which it might be seen to be in implacable opposition, the family retrenchment mode. Let me explain. Each of these approaches to the crisis of contemporary family life ultimately fails to make contact with the deepest evolving needs of those human subjects who comprise the heart of the family's existence. The retrenchment approach, for example, seeks to negate the changes of heart, mind, and social arrangements brought about by the women's movement. But these changes cannot be denied: one can only attempt to repress them. In so doing, one creates a false veneer of certainty based on denial that can only worsen the tensions and strains upon family members, for it fails to respond creatively to the challenges (for crises are also challenges) of the day. The deconstruction mode also fails to treat its human subjects with the respect due reflective agents. It treats the human body, particularly the woman's body and its role in the reproductive cycle, with contempt. Worst of all, children become either a pity or a predicament—some "thing" to be efficiently managed, kept out of sight, under the guise of non-authoritarianism, to grow at their own "groovy" rate unbothered by nasty adults. The child's need for a foundation of love and learning in an environment that favors and provides long-term particular attachments is denied. In other words, the child's developmental needs and requirements are never taken into account; thus, the retrenchment group and the deconstruction group, each in its own way, distorts the future by denying real human beings in the present.

THERE IS, however, an alternative. I call it *family reconstruction*. This mode involves an active, morally engaged and theoretically reflective approach to the crises and changes affecting family life. The family reconstruction position involves a commitment to a particular ideal of family existence that does not repeat earlier terms of female oppression or exploitation. It begins with an affirmation: some form of familial ties and mode of child-rearing is essential to attain the minimal bedrock of human social existence. What we call human capacities could not exist without a familial mode; for human beings to flourish a particular ideal of the family is necessary.

To state a presumptive case for familial ties, to argue that they are required to make us minimally human, is *not* to detail the specific familial forms within which the creation and nourishment of humanity take place. That is a future task which demands our best and most worthy efforts. The point I wish to make now is that children incur an assault to their humanness, an affront they will know in the very tissue of their bio-psychic beings, if they suffer the diseases of neglect and non-attachment. A being without a presumptive need for attachments of a specific kind—concrete, particular and continuing—*would not suffer distortion and damage if such relations were absent*. Just as Marx's theory of alienation presupposes an ideal of human existence that would hold in the absence of damage done by exploitative and oppressive social structures, so the picture we now have of what happens to children in the absence of strong, early attachments to specific adult others, allows us to assert that we are dealing with an axiomatic of authentic human existence.

Children, if they are to be both morally and socially responsible and potentially self-reflective adults, must be reared in a highly charged emotional setting in which they are loved in a manner that establishes basic trust. This requires the continuing presence of specific beloved others, for it is only through powerful, eroticized relations with such specific others, parents or their permanent, not temporary, surrogates that the child will be nurtured and protected in a way that allows his or her creation of self and others to be structured and mediated by parental care and concern. It is only through the child's internalization of specific others that he or she can later identify with non-familial human beings. These ties cannot emerge in abstract, diffuse, non-familialized settings. This is the moral imperative which animates the family reconstruction mode.

There is, of course, an irritant in the image, and that is that in order to provide such trust and security for their children parents, in turn, must experience trust and security themselves in their relations with one another and with the "outside world." As Erik Erikson argued years ago, parents who are frustrated and demeaned, rendered helpless in worklife and citizenship, will have great difficulty instilling such bedrock beliefs, ways of being, inside the family. Conflicts that emerge from "outside" get displaced "inside," into the very heart of the family's emotional existence. That is all too often our current reality. What this means is that those of us devoted to the family reconstructive mode cannot carry out our supremely important effort unless or until there are real structural changes in American life. This is where the heart of "politics and the family" truly lies—not in overpoliticizing our most intimate relations and turning the family into the war of all against all but in fighting the pressures at work from the outside which threaten to erode, impoverish, or preclude the flourishing of our most basic human ties.



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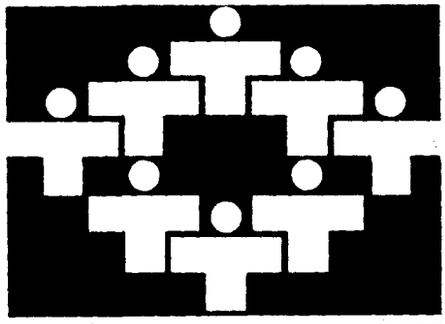

THE FAMILY IN A TIME OF TROUBLES—II

The moral meaning of the family

STANLEY HAUERWAS

BY THE TIME you read this, the saga of the White House Conference on the Family will have come to an end. What had once seemed like a politically welcome and inoffensive project—who could be opposed to strengthening the American family?—was marked from the start by bitter squabbles over staffing, procedure, and agenda. Catholic lobbying eliminated the original candidate to head the Conference staff. A conservative "pro-family coalition" suspected the whole operation of cloaking a further assault on the traditional family by liberal social engineers. Pro-choice and pro-life activists clashed at state conventions, and some states dropped out of the delegate-selection process altogether. The pro-family coalition walked out of the first of the Conference's three meetings, in Baltimore; and a contretemps at the second meeting, in Minneapolis, caused both Catholic Charities and the U.S. Catholic Conference to withdraw from the moderate-to-liberal Coalition for the White House Conference.

Like the earlier state conventions, both these meetings could agree on some recommendations: flexibility in working hours and employment policies so as to support parental responsibility; repeal of the higher federal tax "penalty" for working married couples; increases in the housing supply; tax credits for families who care for aged relatives at home; recognition for social security and tax purposes of the economic value of homemaking and caring for children; and, in fact, a whole shopping list of other items. Yet even here, votes were often close; the issues of abortion, homosexual rights, and ERA were never far away; and the final recommendations seemed a little like a thin layer of scar tissue over the very deep wounds.

The premise for the White House Conference was that the family is "in crisis"—a premise commonly advanced, first, by the observation that the family is a very good thing, and, then, by the familiar recitation of divorce statistics, examples of wife- and child-beating, rates of delinquency, claims of women's liberation, evidences of rising immorality and self-centered hedonism. By saving the family, it is implied, we can save our society. Of course, others have suggested that the very idea that the family is in crisis is a mistake, one besetting those who cannot distinguish crisis from change. In spite of everything, it is pointed out, people seem to end living together and some even have children. The rising divorce rate does not necessarily indicate that the family has broken down. The fact that an extremely high percentage of the divorced remarry may indeed suggest just the opposite. They even seem to remarry individuals remarkably like their former spouses. The family, in spite of indications to the contrary, remains a tough institution not easily defeated. Could it be that those who decry the loss of familial relationships are only arbitrarily asserting a preference for one style of family constellation over others?

What the whole saga of the White House Conference demonstrated, if demonstration was necessary, is that the central issue is not really whether the family will continue to exist, but what kind of family should exist and what moral presuppositions are necessary to form and sustain it. The fact is, the most divisive question of all at these meetings was the very *definition* of the family. It might once have been thought a poor minimum—but one inevitable in a morally pluralistic society—to content ourselves with the Census Bureau definition of the family as "a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption." Even that, it turns out, proved controversial, with some Conference participants wanting to close a "loophole" by adding "heterosexual" before "marriage," and others worried that the definition excluded "single-person families," homosexual couples, and alternative "structures and lifestyles."

In these terms, it does make sense to suggest that we are in a crisis: our problem is that we no longer can describe what the family should be and/or why we should think of it as our most basic moral institution.

Because we have all had an experience of family and most of us are involved in families, it seems bizarre to suggest that we do not know what our involvement means. I am suggesting that we lack the moral and linguistic resources to express adequately what happened to us and what we do in families. More importantly, I am convinced that the moral language of our culture actually tends to distort the very experience we are trying to describe.

Ethicists, moreover, will provide little help in recovering the experience of the family. For modern ethical reflection, the family is simply an anomaly, a curiosity left over from previous ages. From the "moral point of view," identification with relatives appears at best a sentimental attachment, but more

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likely an irrational commitment. Nowhere in contemporary ethical literature is there a discussion of the simple but fundamental assumption that we have a responsibility to our own children which overrides responsibility to children who are not ours. Although a powerful assumption, there is no adequate account in contemporary ethical reflection of why we hold it or if it is justified. Instead, the best my colleagues can offer is the doubtful thesis that children ought to have rights.

It is no surprise, therefore, that one of the few questions disconcerting to the Notre Dame students who take my course on Marriage and the Family is, "What reason would you give why one should be willing to have children?" They say "children are fun," or "children are an expression of a couple's love," or "it is just the thing to do"; but they clearly doubt that any of these is an adequate basis for having, much less knowing how to raise, children. Their often unexpressed doubt seems to me to illustrate the depth of the crisis concerning the family: we lack a moral account of why we commit ourselves to having children, some normative sense of what it means to be a parent.

Therefore the problem with the kind of naive approach marking not only the White House Conference but much other discussion of the family is that it continues to assume that we all know what we mean when we say the family is a good thing. The moral issue then appears to be that we are not living up to the standards of what we all know to be good. But that simply fails to confront our inability to describe or evaluate "family." Indeed I suspect one of the reasons we so extol the value of the family is because we are so unsure of its worth. We attempt to substitute rhetoric for substance and are thus unable to deal with the obvious shortcomings of the institution.

IN THIS RESPECT I think we are a little like Augustus in one of the episodes of Masterpiece Theater's *I, Claudius*. Like many political reformers and radicals since, Augustus was particularly conservative about personal and familial morality. He believed strongly that the traditional Roman family, which literally placed all power in the hands of the patriarch, was the backbone of the state. Thus he was outraged when he discovered that his daughter had entertained half of Rome in her bed, and that her lovers had come from senatorial families.

In a marvelous scene we see Augustus calling his daughter's lovers before him and lecturing them on the depth of their immorality. His concern was not only that they had been willing to sleep with his daughter, but that they had betrayed their political duty by failing to begin families of their own. Instead of dallying with his daughter, they should be fulfilling their duty as Romans by providing Rome with sons.

Augustus's speech is ironic, because while he no doubt believed everything he was saying, as emperor he was also engaged in policies whose clear result was to weaken the Roman family. Just as he continued to say the senate ruled while systematically stripping it of its power, so he continued to believe in the family but also would not allow it to be, as it had in the past, an independent commonwealth within the state. As Robert Nisbet has pointed out, in earlier times families bore responsibility for most independent offenses; but under Augustus individuals were punished (directly by the state) as if they had no family. Even more important, Augustus changed inheritance laws so that individuals might own property apart from family membership.

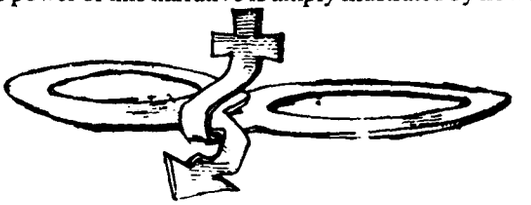
Now I say we resemble Augustus somewhat because we want to retain the fiction that we hold dear the family while adhering to disharmonious convictions and policies that militate against the family. In the classic words of Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." We are inheritors of a history which has rendered the family a highly questionable institution.

This is not the place for me to recount this history. Indeed, I am aware that there is nothing more problematic than historical claims about how the family has changed. Most of us, though, have been influenced by a sociological rendition of what has happened to the family that is useful to recall. In the past the family was large, extended, and patriarchal, but this has been replaced by the nuclear family. This smaller and more democratic family, as a result of growing specialization of social and economic functions, has lost the economic, protective, and educational functions of the traditional family. In the process the family has taken on a more profound and rewarding purpose—namely, it now specializes in emotions.

This new form of family is a correlative of the requirements of industrial society. Christopher Lasch explains this view: "Whereas kinship served as the unifying principle of earlier forms of society, the modern social order rests on impersonal, rational, and 'universalistic' forms of solidarity. In a competitive and highly mobile society the extended family has no place. The nuclear family, on the other hand, serves industrial society as a necessary refuge. It provides adults with an escape from the competitive pressures of the market, while at the same time it equips the young with the inner resources to master those pressures." The nuclear family, according to Edward Shorter, is not characterized by how many people are living under the same roof but by the privileged emotional climate that must be protected from outside intrusion.

This historical account has been challenged by those who insist that the nuclear family was present before the industrial revolution. But aside from whether this particular account is historically or sociologically correct in every detail, it has begun to serve as a normative justification for our understanding of the family. We use this allegedly descriptive account to justify our assumption that the family should be understood as the prime locus of love and intimacy in our society. At the same time, we tend to see the development of the nuclear family as part of the continuing story of freedom a break from the "feudal" or "tribal" institutions of the past.

The power of this narrative is amply illustrated by how it has



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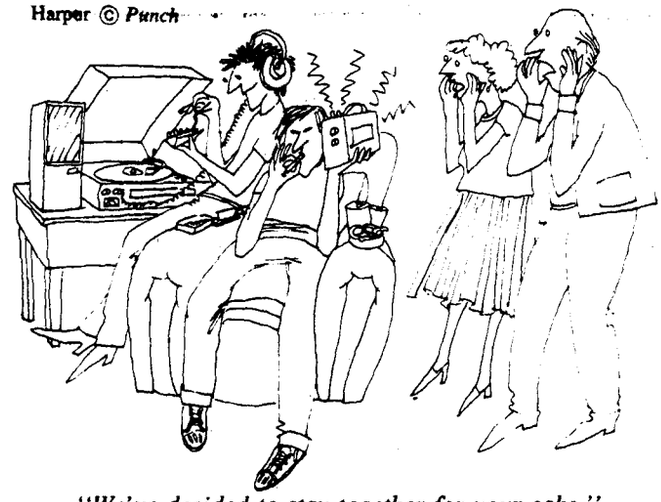
led us to forget that the family has traditionally not been rooted in contract but biology—namely, its core function has been providing human continuity through reproduction and child rearing. As Robert Nisbet reminds us, few people have ever let something as important as the need for future generations rest on anything as fragile as the emotion of love. "Even if we assume that in most places at most times a majority of spouses knew something akin to passionate love, however fleetingly, the great strength of the family has everywhere been consanguineal rather than conjugal. And here, not affection, but duty, obligation, honor, mutual aid, and protection have been the key elements."

Nisbet argues, therefore, that it is not sexual immorality, the revolt of the youth, or women's liberation that has weakened the family, but rather the loss of economic, political, and moral functions of the family that have generated the former. Contrary to the expectation that this might have been accidental, the very moral convictions linked to the history recounted above necessarily had this result. For family kinship has always been an anomaly for the liberal tradition. Only if human beings can be separated in a substantial degree from kinship can they be free individuals subject to egalitarian policies of our society. Thus we simply assume—and this is an assumption shared alike by political conservative and liberal—that it is more important to be an "autonomous person" than to be a "Hauerwas" or a "Pulaski" or a "Smith." Thus for example, the Supreme Court held in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Danforth* that husbands have no rights if their wives wish an abortion since "abortion is a purely personal right of the woman, and the status of marriage can place no limitation on personal rights." As Paul Ramsey has observed, in spite of our society's alleged interest in the bond of marriage that bond is now understood simply as a contract between individuals who remain as atomistic as before marriage.

In the name of freedom we have created "the individual," who now longs for community in the form of "interpersonal interaction." The family is praised, therefore, in Christopher Lasch's marvelous phrase, as a "haven in a heartless world"—the paradigm of "interpersonal relations." Such a conception of the family assumes, moreover, "a radical separation between work and leisure and between public and private life. The emergence of the nuclear family as the principal form of family life reflected the high value modern society attached to privacy, and the glorification of privacy in turn reflected the devaluation of work." Thus, according to Lasch, relations in the family have come to resemble relations in the rest of the society—namely, a relationship between friendly strangers. "Parents refrain from arbitrarily imposing their wishes on the child, thereby making it clear that authority deserves to be regarded as valid only insofar as it conforms to reason. Yet in the family as elsewhere 'universalistic' standards prove on examination to be illusory." And as a result relations in the family too often become nothing less than power struggles between independent principalities.

In an attempt to defuse the destructiveness of this situation, parents try to raise their children by undervaluing the intensity



"We've decided to stay together for your sake."

of family life. By becoming our child's friend we think we can avoid the politics of the family, which are too often the dirtiest politics of all. We know that too often parents make inordinate sacrifices for their children, sacrifices which the parents then use as blackmail. So we assume the way to avoid such strategies is to develop a form of life where no one is asked to sacrifice at all or to suffer for anyone else. We treat our children as equals which, translated, means we place no demands on them. We thus raise our children permissively; because we fear "imposing" our values on them and psychologically damaging them. But by doing so we fail to see that permissiveness is a form of social control that results in the authority of the peer group being substituted for that of the family.

Ironically this kind of family which was justified in the name of intimacy now finds intimacy impossible to sustain. For, as Ferdinand Mount points out, "in a truly intimate relationship one person makes unique claims upon another, claims for services, affection, respect and attention which can be supplied only by that one person." By trying to make the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, impersonal we try to avoid the demands of intimacy. "Intimacy," writes Mount, "always entails personal authority. The claims of a child for care and love, even if unspoken by child or mother, are just as much a moral authority over his father as the father's claims for filial affection and/or obedience and respect. For authority in this sense does not depend upon inequality nor does it wither away under the beneficent rays of equality. It depends solely upon one person acknowledging another person's right to make claims on him in particular."

The relationship between liberalism and the family is obviously a complex matter requiring a more nuanced argument than I can develop here. However, in brief I am suggesting that the "crisis of the family" does not indicate the *absence* of a moral attitude toward the family, but reflects how the family has increasingly been formed by what in fact are the deepest moral convictions we have about ourselves. Our liberal forefathers assumed that their commitment to the freedom of

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the individual was consistent with and even supportive of the family. Milton Friedman continues this assumption as he claims that liberals, "take freedom of the individual, or perhaps the family, as our ultimate goal in judging social arrangements. In a society freedom has nothing to say about what an individual does with his freedom; it is not an all-embracing ethic. Indeed, a major aim of the liberal is to leave the ethical problem for the individual to wrestle with."

But as Robert Paul Wolff has stated, from such a perspective,

> the ties of blood are merely one source among many of the desires whose satisfaction we seek rationally to maximize. One man enjoys eating, and puts his money into fine food; a second races fast cars, and allocates his resources for carburetors and tune-ups; a third man raises children—his own—and he finds himself possessed of the strong desire that they should be happy and healthy. So he puts his resources into their schooling and food and clothing, and spends his spare time with them. If his desire for his children's welfare is stronger than his taste in fine cars or fine food, then rationality will dictate that he spend more on them than on eating and transportation. But if his desire is not essentially different from those of his fellow citizens, the state has no reason to treat his interest in his children as taking precedence over his neighbor's interest in racing cars or fine food.

By accepting this as an account of ourselves, we, the heirs of the liberal tradition, find ourselves bereft of the moral anchor supplied by those particularistic commitments we used to indicate with the word "family."

IF MY ANALYSIS of the moral crisis of the family is even close to being correct, then what we require is a language to help us articulate the experience of the family and the loyalties it represents. Such a language will thus determine how we understand ourselves and our society because the family is integral to the entire culture. Such a language must clearly denote our character as historical beings and how our moral lives are based in particular loyalties and relations. If we are to learn to care for others, we must first learn to care for those we find ourselves joined to by accident of birth. Only then will love be understood, aside from attraction to those who are like us, also as regard and respect for those whom we have not have chosen but to whom we find ourselves tied.

For the most inescapable fact about families, regardless of their different forms and customs, is that we do not choose to be part of them. We do not choose our relatives; they are simply given. * Of course we can like some better than others, but even those we do not like are inextricably ours. To be part of a family is to understand what it means to be "stuck with" a history and a people. Thus we even enjoy telling stories about our often less than admirable kin because such stories help us know what being "stuck with" such a history entails. Unfortunately, we have tended today to understand such story-telling primarily as entertainment (which it surely is) rather than representing the moral affirmation of what it means to be part of a family.

In other words, the family is morally crucial for our existence as the only means we have to bind time. Without the family, and the inter-generational ties involved, we have no way to know what it means to be historic beings. As a result we become determined by rather than determining our histories. Set out in the world with no family, without story of and for the self, we will simply be captured by the reigning ideologies of the day.

Put differently, we must recover the moral importance of our willingness to have children. Like it or not, the most morally significant thing any of us ever has the opportunity to do is to have children. A child represents our willingness to go on in the face of difficulties, suffering, and in our case, the ambiguity of modern life and is thus our claim that we have something worthwhile to pass on. The refusal to have children can be the ultimate act of despair that often masks the deepest kind of self-hate and disgust The fear and rejection of parenthood, the tendency to view the family as nothing more than companionable marriage, and the understanding of marriage as one of a series of nonbinding commitments, are but indications that our society has a growing distrust of our ability to deal with the future.

In this respect, the most telling devaluation of the family in *All Our Children*, the much discussed Carnegie Council report on the family written by Kenneth Keniston, is the complete absence of any indication that the family involves more than those ties necessary to raise children. The complex ties of adult children to adult parents simply do not exist from the perspective of the report. It is as though Social Security has removed all responsibility adult children have for parents; and that adult parents can now retire to sunny lands, their responsibilities over when their children are "making it on their own." Any sense that the elderly have a responsibility to share their wisdom with their children or that they have a responsibility to lead decent lives in support of their children has been eradicated by convincing the aged that the one benefit of growing old in a society that has no place for them is freedom from all responsibilities.

Ironically, the loss of any moral role for such older parents is a correlative of the loss of any moral task for younger parents. It is not sufficient to welcome children, for we must also be willing to initiate them into what we think is true and good about human existence. For example, I think we should not admire religious or non-religious parents who fail to educate their children in the parents' convictions. It is a false and bad-faith position to think that we can or should raise our children to "make up their own minds" when they grow up. Children are not without values today; instead, we as parents lack the courage to examine our own lives in a manner that we

* In *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick makes the interesting observation that liberals and radicals have always had an ambiguous relationship to the family since it is not appropriate to enforce across wider society the love and care within a family where such relationships are voluntarily undertaken. Nozick must surely have an odd sense of "voluntary," since the family is anything but "voluntary."

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can know what we pass on is truthful and duty-paid.

Only by recovering this kind of moral confidence will parents deserve to reclaim their claim from the "experts." In matters moral there are no "experts"; and therefore all parents are charged with forming their children's lives according to what they know best. Rather than "experts," there are moral paradigms, guides for us. The task for parents is to direct their children's attention to those paradigms which provide the most compelling sense of what we can and should be.

What, briefly, do I think religous faith has to do with all this? It is not, I think, the usual assumption that the Judeo-Christian tradition keeps people on the straight and narrow sexual path necessary to sustain marriage. On the contrary, my classes on marriage are begun with the observation that both Christianity and marriage teach us that life is not about "happiness." Rather, the Hebrew-Christian tradition helps sustain the virtue of hope in a world which rarely provides evidence that such hope is justified. There may be a secular analogue to such hope, but for those of us who identify with Judaism or Christianity, our continued formation of families is witness to our belief that the falseness of this world is finally bounded by a more profound truth.

Art

ICONS OF VULGARITY

PLEBEIAN ENERGY & PATRICIAN REPRISAL

THE ZONING LAWS that permit residential lofts, such as those in New York's Soho, to be sandwiched between commercial ones in the same building are based on the premise that the production of art is a form of "light manufacturing." In this instance, the bureaucratic imagination is well ahead of the popular one in granting art its secular status and in recognizing the nature of the art market.

A significant component of success on the current market is the willingness to replicate oneself. Salability hinges considerably on finding a convincing style that is also a formula allowing one to create relatively identical works on a production basis in much the same way as a bootmaker. The recognizability of the product provides reassurance to a public that is overanxious to decipher what the artist is "saying" but underequipped to see what he is actually doing. The duplication of the product assures repeated sales to art marketeers who *do* know what the artist is doing.

Lester Johnson, one of the best known contemporary figure painters, knows his trade. He is a careerist with a market sense that would be the envy of any commodities broker. His work demonstrates that an artistic sensibility, far from pollen-delicate, is a solid apparatus.

In the early fifties Johnson was a second-generation Abstract Expressionist, an action painter with an inchoate interest in content. Back then, figurative interest was chancy. Abstraction was the reigning doctrine, the figure was déclassé in theoretical circles, and young painters with ambition were jockeying for place in Hans Hofmann's do-your-own-thing retinue of expressionists.

But the death of the figure never quite happened. The figure, like any good narrative, didn't lose its popular appeal. Besides, by the seventies, the cash value of abstraction was in decline. *The Wall Street Journal,* discussing slumping investor confidence, was blunt: "Since the end of the speculative sixties, few people have been willing to put their money on contemporary painters who churn out those while-you-wait abstracts."

Johnson's long shot paid off.

Over the years, as the canons of abstraction have become less formidable, Johnson's commitment to the figure has become more resolute. Forms have become sharper, outlines more definitive and less painterly, the imagery and its underlying attitude as hard and clear as the surfaces themselves. What few drips and blots still occur seem not so much "accidents" of haste as a mannerism calling attention to Johnson's past affinities with Pollock and DeKooning. They are bits of art history performing as theatrical asides.

His current canvases, life-sized Proustian friezes of young girls and guys, continue the pictorial theme he has been restating without let-up for the past ten years. The subject matter of his recent New York show at the Gimpel Weitzenhoffer Gallery was established by 1970: panoramas of the man-in-the-street, interchangeable people in passage, isolated individuals in a group.

By now, Johnson's lonely crowd is both a stylistic and a sociological cliché. What makes his latest paintings interesting is not so much the subject matter as Johnson's own posture toward it. Contrary to popular piety, which fancies the artist as a disenfranchised adversary of bourgeois values, Lester Johnson *is* the bourgeoisie. He paints with just that blend of sensuality, scholarship, irony, and class consciousness — one could even say snobbery — that plants him squarely on his lawn in Milford, Connecticut.

As Johnson has become older, his figures have become younger, more obviously working-class. It is this change of pitch, a shift of emphasis on age and class, that commands attention. In his latest street scenes it is the minor premise that gives life to an otherwise overworked theme. These paintings are less a commeht on the condition of Man, as critics have been claiming over the last two decades, than a statement of the personal predicament of one now-successful man leaving middle age.

Johnson's present women are as brassy as ever but no longer matronly, and each with the same head of voguish frizzed hair. They are predictably dressed in the gaudy patterns that are Johnson's trademark. But in the earlier paintings, when the male figures wore suits and bowlers and carried newspapers, the patterning of the women's dresses served a strictly formal purpose. They functioned as abstract decorative elements, as well as spatial divisions, in the same way that patterns function

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in medieval manuscripts and Persian miniatures. Now, with the men in T-shirts, baseball caps, shades, and motorcycle insignia, the fabric also typecasts. This is arnel-triacetate sleaze. These are the shop and office girls who spend their paychecks in Klein's and Alexander's basements.

The blank, characteristically stylized gaze of these young plebeians comes closer to caricature than in any of his previous work. They have given the unseeing, homogenized expression that is part of any fashion illustrator's stock of devices. The expression reads as a form of patrician reprisal. These icons of breezy vulgarity are being paid back for their youth and energy. This is youth from the bitter vantage point of age: vapid, undifferentiated, commonplace. They are granted no distinction other than that of class. And why not? The young have the years ahead to distinguish and refine them. Right now, Lester Johnson is a professor at Yale.

Antagonism is inherent in the combative, mechanical motions of these figures. They file across the canvas, limbs moving like piston rods and levers, in attitudes that owe as much to aggression as to locomotion. The sense of assault is emphasized by the reiteration of Johnson's favorite pose: a raised knee. Like Truffaut's *Man Who Loved Women*, Johnson is a leg man. But these knees could as easily be on their way to the spectator's groin as to the next step.

In all of Johnson's cityscapes the sense of movement, of *mise en scène*, derives from the gestures of the figures and from the gestural qualities of the paint itself. Arms and legs swing forward and upward, shoulders hunch and turn, all in greater obedience to compositional and psychological demands than to anatomical truth. Modeling, which creates a sculptural effect and sets figures solidly on the ground, is minimized in favor of contour lines. Thinned, fluid outlines are put down quickly with a calligraphic deftness that enhances the illusion of motion. The outlines bind limbs and color areas together in an undulating line that encourages the eye to pass like a rumor from one form to the next, from one color tract to another.

At the turn of the seventies, Johnson's figures, often depicted against suggestions of city architecture, jostled each other across the canvas with the same frenzy that propels urban adults through the endless purposes and digressions of midlife. In the street scenes of 1980, the dynamism is still there but the hurry is gone. At 61, Johnson seems to have lost interest in urgency. The figures are still in motion, but at the tempo of a procession rather than a crowd. The previous overlapping of foreground figures against background ones has given way to a moving line of figures on essentially the same plane. Outlines are tighter, applied with less bravura.

Color also slows the cadence of these recent canvases. The tonal range is narrower. Contrasts are softer, the stridencies gone. Golden earth tones, the ochers and siennas, are used to create a blonde glow that comes to a harmonic close in the cadmiums, cobalt and manganese blues, mars violets and browns of the patterning. Johnson's color has never been more evocative. It is exquisitely suited to the late-summer afternoons for which these figures are dressed and to their ready sexuality that is as diffuse as the light that informs them.

The paint curving over these thighs and derrieres is irresistible. It is an invitation to voyeurism. Or an unseemly touch. And the touch, when it comes, is a bit of a shock. The canvases are finished with a thick coat of damar varnish. No soft flesh after all. Only a hard gloss appropriate to the simonized fenders of the secondhand Thunderbirds these barbarians drive to the shopping mall in.

Johnson borrows from Fernand Léger for his formal vocabulary and its supporting concern with contemporaneity. There are strong echoes of Reginald Marsh in the feisty voluptuousness of the figures. But Léger applauded the coarseness of America ("Bad taste is one of the valuable raw materials of this country. Bad taste, strong color,") whereas Johnson paints with none of Léger's proletarian sympathies or Marsh's good humor. There is no civility or empathy in these works. There is only hostility. And beneath that a certain yearning for something close to what Paul Goodman phrased "lilacs/or young ass."

Johnson knows how to paint and how to accommodate his painting to market demands. His recipe permits him to produce about two dozen of these Lester Johnsons each year, priced at up to $20,000. That the work is still interesting is a testament to the durability and expressive power of Johnson's formularized iconography and to his own high craftsmanship. Nevertheless, this last show was a replica of his previous one. It seems fair to ask whether or not the habit of self-copying has begun to lead to an art in which the only true content is the artist's own trademark. MAUREEN MULLARKEY

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Screen

THE WANING

KUBRICK'S GRANDIOSE HOTEL

STANLEY KUBRICK'S *The Shining* is a movie about cabin fever. If it were set in a cabin, Kubrick might have been able to concentrate his energies on his characters. Their relationships might have built up enough steam to blow the roof off this film. But being Kubrick, he has to have cabin fever in a castle. The setting for *The Shining*, the Stephen King best-seller which Kubrick and Diane Johnson have adapted, is of course an entire hotel with only three lodgers. And not just an ordinary hotel, but one of those gothic-rustic piles built in the Rockies at the turn of the century. The idea of those hotels, inspired by Teddy Roosevelt, was to let Easterners revel in Manifest Destiny. The point when building them was to squander natural materials like timber in a way that would reassure everyone America could never run out of either natural resources or space. As a consequence, any psychological tensions Kubrick might have generated just evaporate into the countless cubic feet of thin air the film's set contains. The vast chilliness of the closed-down hotel and Kubrick's own cold, analytical style of filmmaking keep the fever here from ever reaching the contagious stage.

To tell the truth, psychodrama isn't Kubrick's *forte* anyway. He is a creator of *mises en scène*, a master of grand *tableaux* in which the characters are usually life-size cutouts. The heroes of his best films—Ryan O'Neal in *Barry Lyndon* and the crew of the spaceship in *2001*—have no psychological depth. They reveal themselves most fully in scenes where the action is inconsequential, scenes of low drama such as the one in *2001* where the crew chats about their mission with their commanding officer aboard a lunar taxi. *2001* is ninety percent scenes of this sort, and *Barry Lyndon* is also a film set largely on social occasions and hedged around with eighteenth-century decorum and ceremony. The best acting in *The Shin-*

POEMS: Jock Henderson, Jr.

Rat Brain Scan Check Points

I-1

Rat brain scan check points and Check-point Charlie
At the Brandenburg Gates are not quite the same.
The barbed concrete and grim-visaged arrogance
Of the latter are visible, whereas the jammed
Instruments of science in the public interest
Cannot locate the microscopic beams of the former.

2

The war messenger's lament goes unheard.
A PSI-war malaise of radar nightmares
And vacuum locks, goes undeterred by
De-classified science and technology.
Tales of death, tales of torture
Rise up beneath the heaven's harrow
And perish, as if into bottomless labyrinths,
Only to return distorted as dime-store myths:
UFO's, cacedemonic crimes and perversions,
Pop-mod psych, and radioactive psycho-pathos
Dissolve opaque violence into something broken
And lame, into something less than nothing.

II: *The Lament of the War Messenger*

Can you feel the origins of fear,
the transport of feces
or waves of peristalsis
Deep in your neurons, dear?
Oh my Los Alamos honey, my Nagasaki pussy,
There are such dreary, final blackouts
In this dull, foul holocaust.
I learned about the neutron bomb
On your brain and the ballistic
Interdiction on the path to your womb
At great expense to my public reputation.
My genitals bear the stigma
Of a covert surgical operation.
No one but myself can touch them
Except to cut them off at checkpoint.
I loiter over the loss of choice,
At the decline of judgment subjected
To a plague of total control.
All human brains are now rat-scanned
By the invisible, uninvited presence
Of the subliminal synapse patrol.

III

We live in formaldehyde, inside the missing jar
With the obsolete, bullet-riddled brain.
The truth of classified R-and-D is missing
In action astride the East-West corridor.
On the frontiers of history,
Inside the fortified silos and submarines,
Professional warriors have computerized their neurons
Into closed loops with doomsday weapons
Double-cocked and stop-gapped beside them.
Each synapse cuts out its risky bit,
a rat brain scan check point,
Harnessed to the machines of global fate.
On and on, temporal sequence flees
Towards something preordained,
Towards some eminently, impossible state.

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ing is a scene where Jack (Jack Nicholson) first goes to the Overlook Hotel to be interviewed for the job of winter caretaker. This routine business meeting is almost the only scene in the film where Nicholson shows any restraint as a performer.

The *mise en scène* of the hotel has to be what attracted Kubrick to King's novel. Since I read *The Shining* while standing in the check-out line at the supermarket, my recall of it is somewhat spotty. (If I hadn't finished the book before I got to the cashier, I might have had to pay for it.) Though Kubrick has changed some details at the hotel—lapidary bushes that snap at passersby in the novel have become an inscrutable maze in the film—I think that basically he sticks to King's conception of the place. My impression was, however, that King doesn't allow the room for a purely psychological interpretation of events that Kubrick allows. King writes for the crowd interested in the supernatural. His characters are psychic, not merely psycho. But Kubrick obviously can't swallow all that nonsense, so he has tried to make the plot at least ambiguous. Everything that happens at the hotel can be seen as an hallucination, a part of a mental breakdown that Jack is suffering. The desire to make the film read this way is what gets Kubrick into the, for him, uncertain area of character development and acting.

It goes very much against the Kubrick myth to suggest that there might be some aspect of one of his films over which he hasn't had complete control. But the plain truth is that in *The Shining* he has let Jack Nicholson run riot. Nicholson is an actor who needs to be kept on a tight leash. If he isn't closely directed, he overacts, as he demonstrated when he directed himself in *Going South*. In Kubrick's film Jack is made to seem dangerous and crazy before the family even moves to the Overlook Hotel. His wife (Shelley Duvall) mentions to their doctor that Jack is a reformed alcoholic who once dislocated their little boy's shoulder in a fit of rage. At the hotel all the liquor has been removed for the winter; yet one night Jack finds a 1920s party in progress in the main ballroom, and the bartender on duty pours him free drinks until he's sloshed. Some things that happen—such as his mysterious release from a storage locker where his wife imprisons him out of fear he's running amok—suggest that all the sinister people Jack sees from the hotel's past are real ghosts rather than hallucinations.

The Martyr and the Army

The performer numbs toward the moribund,
Grabs with killer claws for the jugular,
And strangles himself to death.
From his throat, tin soldiers strut into a
Battle circus. Puppet wraiths rush out
From the perverse gullet, of necessity,
Mortal but ready to die at arms.
One by one, they go to the maniacal attack.
See? Beneath the night shroud,
An entire army arises from the trachea
Of one, singular martyr, now divine
With the rigor mortis of military design.

The Proof of the Haunted Tool

I

But what if the poet is shot down
in the middle of the proof? (kapow!)
Shot down just off the premises,
(kersplat! my torso lands in blood)
A ghost beyond the major (rattle)
A flash below the minor premise? (gurgle)
(The body breathes ragged in mortal battle)
Would *conclusio* turn up, a corpse inferred?
Would my flesh turn up, proof against these words?
(Blackened blood flushes from the cortege)

II

Only logic and machine remain hand to hand,
Tooling the rule of nature by man.
Thus proof concludes on its own,
An ideal machine with no audible groan,
The pen continues to cross the page,
A ghostly solo staged by a feathered quill,
In a lonely struggle of the autonomous will.
Inexorable, those laws of logic,
Relentless, the drive from hand to tool,
To hand and back to tool become machine:
And the world will be controlled by mankind.

(i)

child with no hands
mutant fetus aborted
wordless man untooled
worldless spacewalker adrift
earth umbilical severed
history's dead depraved
vacuumous, anonymous dooms
no epitaphs, not even graves

III

Beside a hammer of ebony rubber,
A diamond braided chisel rests in beauty
Upon an ivory tombstone.
Who but the unseen soldier shoots to kill?
Though the proof of the haunted tool remains
A shadowy epitaph inferred out of the unknown,
Yet those ghostly links animate
This corpse through hardest stone.

(Jock Henderson's poem "Feeling the Heat's Pyrotechnics," published in the December 21, 1979 Commonweal, *received the second-place award for poetry from the Catholic Press Association.)*

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But much of what he sees we could as easily take to be figments of his own deranged imagination.

Nicholson obviously feels that he has to live up to all these overwrought visions, or rather act up to them. And act up he does. In order to make us believe that he's someone who could be seeing pink elephants of such Kubrickian quality, he mugs, scowls, double-takes, grins, pouts, and leers constantly. When he enters a forbidden room where something has terrified his son Danny (Danny Lloyd), he finds a beautiful, naked woman. He reacts to her with such exaggerated, goatish lust that the whole scene, which is ultimately supposed to be scary, is laughable instead. That Nicholson comes on in such an aggressive, hammy way might not be so bad if Kubrick had made his wife into an adequate antagonist for him. But she is, as played by Shelley Duvall, the much blander sort of person we are used to encountering in Kubrick's films. She's the sort of woman who calls her husband "hon" all the time. When he delivers a vicious tirade because she's interrupted his work to tell him his dinner is ready, she says neutrally, "I'm sorry, hon." She's a perky, cheery, empty-headed optimist who tries to look on the bright side of everything Jack does right up until, almost, the moment he takes after her with a fire axe.

Unable to control one side of his film, Kubrick loses his grip on the other as well. The *mise en scène*, like Nicholson's performance, turns into a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. It's as if Kubrick has become the victim of the uncertainty he himself is trying to create. He is unable to make sense out of Jack's hallucinations at the hotel, just as we are unable to tell for sure whether they are really hallucinations. The genius of both *2001* and *Barry Lyndon* is that all the spectacular and visionary scenes really do mean something in the end. They work toward a clarification of the human experiences those films depict. They provide that clarification which acting and character development do not provide in a Kubrick film.

But in *The Shining* the fantasy remains just the ravings of a lunatic. Could it be Kubrick believes that all this stuff Jack sees really is being conjured up by Jack himself rather than by Stanley Kubrick, the director of this movie? The most decisive evidence we have that Jack's visions are his and his alone is that they are so incoherent. Where Nicholson's performance is too obvious, the symbolisms of the *mise en scène* are too obscure. The one complements the other nicely. Each contributes to the nonentity of the film as a whole. Nicholson's histrionics as he stalks Kubrick's vast, empty hotel are like an explosion going off in a void. They are like Bishop Berkeley's tree falling in the forest when no one is there to hear it. With no one in the theaters to watch Kubrick's film, maybe it will cease to exist. That would be the best thing that could happen to Kubrick's career just now. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: THE WARS BETWEEN THE STATES

THE LAST ENTREPRENEURS:
AMERICA'S REGIONAL WARS FOR JOBS AND DOLLARS

Robert Goodman

Simon & Schuster, $11.95, 292 pp.

Jack Clark

IN the 1970s, America discovered—and sometimes reveled in—new regional conflicts. The chronicler of SDS, Kirkpatrick Sale, churned out an ambitious and influential bestseller proclaiming a *Power Shift* away from the declining Northeast-Midwest and toward the booming Virginia-California Sunbelt. Carl Oglesby, one of those chronicled in Sale's earlier book, wrote of the Yankee-Cowboy conflict within the ruling class. On the other side of the barricades, Norman Podhoretz blamed a Southern literary clique for debasing genuine liberalism and leading us toward the New Politics.

Of course, discussion of the Sunbelt-Snowbelt conflict was not limited to Messrs. Sale, Oglesby and Podhoretz. The *New York Times* covered the newest New South and the wider Sunbelt extensively. Congressional caucuses were formed, and governors and mayors clashed with each other and with national administrations in fights to allocate federal tax money regionally. Differences in climate and culture were examined, and sometimes a commentator would claim that the regional conflict was other than what it appeared (East-West, rather than North-South or to follow one exotic example, the Pacific Northwest over all). Business leaders and economists picked up the new regional conflict and applied its lessons enthusiastically. The problem rested on "business climate," the sum total of wages, benefits, taxes, costs of regulation and general karma facing business. This business climate in turn determined which regions grow and which atrophy. New York City might go the way of Lowell or Newark? Such is the rule of the market.

Not so, says Robert Goodman in a provocative and fresh discussion on this very worn topic. As the title implies, Goodman argues that the market has been turned on its head; the late entrepreneurs are the cities and states bidding against one another for the favors of corporate location or relocation. The public officials bid with the only stake they have: our money. Tax favors, relaxation of regulations, free land, state-sponsored employee training programs, harassment of union organizers are offered as inducements. If the "winners" in this struggle to keep or attract jobs and businesses tend to be low-wage, low-tax, anti-union cities and states, the pressure on the "losers" in the regional struggle is

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well-nigh impossible to resist. Goodman compares the process to crop rotation in agriculture. A highly developed area is left fallow as investment is planted in new soil. After awhile, the new area begins to resemble the area the investor left: the fallow area becomes more fertile for investment. Thus, after nearly a decade of high unemployment, the New York City bricklayers' union agreed to a fourteen percent cut in 1977.

The same dynamic explains why Southern metropolitan areas are growing more slowly than either Southern or Northern rural areas. The city of Dallas, Texas, for example, has lost population since 1970. Despite the paeans to the Sunbelt's climate and culture, the investor's calculus rates New Hampshire or northern Vermont (rural work forces with historic memories that the unions drove the jobs away with their excessive demands) as better bets than Atlanta or Fort Worth.

As our government units compete with each other for business's favors, business itself is moving away from competition. Goodman marshals the statistics of oligopolistic concentration; 1 percent of all corporations control almost 65 percent of all assets; 2 percent of all corporations control 90 percent of all profits; at least 80 percent of the value of goods shipped is controlled by four companies in the following fields: autos, typewriters, railroad equipment, refrigerators, batteries, sewing machines, glass, tires, wallboard, turbines, and engines. Even more fundamental, business leaders are proclaiming the virtues of planning and cooperation. Business and government are, in the modern scheme, partners. Goodman quotes then Vice President Rockefeller arguing for massive public investment in energy development: "Given the uncertainties which exist in this area, no one should blame private capital for not taking risks. . . . Neither should anyone be surprised that where actions are necessary and private capital cannot take them, government must step in . . . the government will indeed be taking business risks. . . ." The relationship is clear: government takes the entrepreneurial risk, private capital takes the profit. On the state and local level, entrepreneurship by government feeds the corporate coffers even more directly.

Goodman has researched thoroughly, thought originally, and written well on the problems of regional economic conflict; his book deserves a wide audience. But if his analysis is solidly grounded and accurate, his prescriptions seem vague and uncertain. Though attractive, his vision of regional socialism is both unconvincing (is it really better to grow wheat in New England rather than to ship it in from Iowa?) and utopian (is there any current or potential political force that can get us from here to there?). After paying some careful attention to the role of the federal government, Goodman ends up posing a latter-day Jeffersonian vision of self-sufficient communities federated loosely. In fact, much of the regional warfare will be conducted in Washington and in the emerging planning processes Goodman discusses. Before the democratic and socialist decen-

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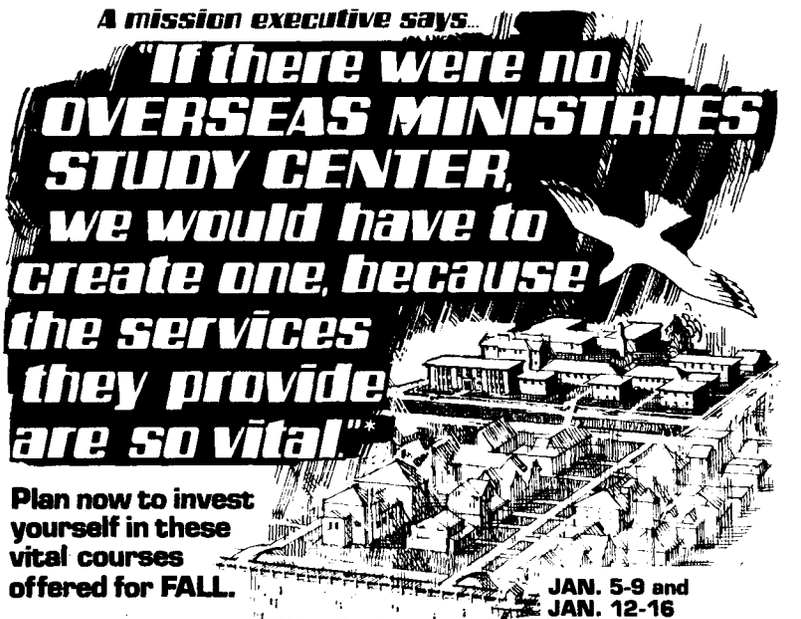

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tralization Goodman envisages can become possible, those national planning mechanisms need to be wrested from the corporations and used in the interests of the larger population, urban and rural, North and South.

Rich, rising anthems of faith

GOSPEL HYMNS AND SOCIAL RELIGION

Sandra S. Sizer

Temple, $15, 222 pp.

THE WELL-TEMPERED LYRE

George W. Ewing

Southern Methodist, $15, 298 pp.

Bruce Cook

NOT SO LONG ago, my daughter, who was raised Catholic, sang in the choir in a local production of *Our Town*. And so it happened that the other night after supper she treated us to the repertoire of Protestant hymns she had learned for the occasion. I listened for a while, then surprised everyone by joining in. "In the Garden," "Bringing in the Sheaves"—did I remember them all? Indeed I did, and I am not ever likely to forget them. For I grew up Methodist, and it seemed to me then, and it still seems to me today that the very essence of the religion—certainly the best of it—was contained in those rich, rising anthems of faith that the congregation sang with such spirit.

Sandra S. Sizer would probably share that view. The thesis of her monograph, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion*, is that the great, burning energy of nineteenth century revivalism was best and most completely expressed in its hymns. And she will use the hymns, she says early in the book, to reveal to us the spirit and style of the movement. She explains:

> In short, I am promising what might be called a "historical sociology of religious language." By this phrase I mean to suggest a pespective which employs insights and methods from several disciplines, especially those varieties of anthropology and literary criticism that emphasize cultural phenomena as linguistic phenomena intimately related to particular social settings. . . .

As she sketches out her methodology she conjures with such powerful names as Clifford Geertz, Levi-Strauss and Kenneth Burke, thus raising expectations high. Yet, strictly speaking, she only does what she says she is going to do in the long second chapter that follows her introduction. In it, she suggests through a close reading of the hymns, that the entire revival movement represented an effort to reconcile a variety of drives and intentions that were in apparent opposition. The question was how they could manage to remain humble, weak, and receptive before the Lord, and yet be the aggressive lions they had to be in order to

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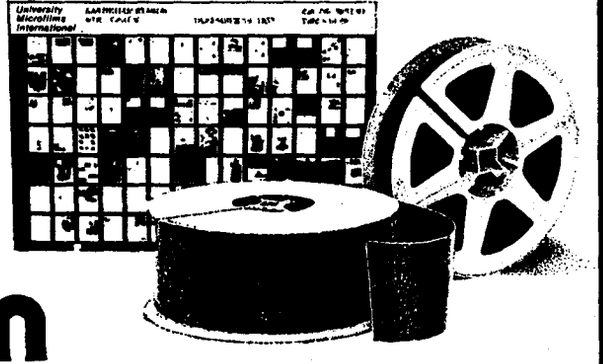

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do God's work out there in the sinful world. Fundamentally, then, the problem was reconciling the *yin* and the *yang* the contemplative vocation and the activist mandate. Each Christian was expected to feel the pull of each and try, in some way, to respond to both.

All this is set forth in *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion* in good, dense academic fashion. Author Sizer chooses her examples well and presents her materials in such a convincing way that one has the feeling that, yes indeed, this must have been *a* basic, if not *the* basic dilemma of revivalist Protestantism. She could have continued profitably along this line in the chapters that follow. However, she shunts us off in quite different directions. We are offered a long look at evangelical literature with the novels, *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and *Barriers Burned Away*. Her "historical sociology of religious language" does not work nearly so well with fiction as it does with lyrics and verse. And the detours that she takes us on through the thickets of controversy surrounding the Abolitionist Movement and the drive for prohibition prove to be even less rewarding. Sandra S. Sizer simply tries to cover too much ground.

George W. Ewing, on the other hand, keeps his focus narrow and his gaze concentrated quite specifically on the Temperance Movement. His book, *The Well-Tempered Lyre*, is so generous in quotation and so comprehensive in selection that, though something more, it is nothing less than a well-annotated anthology of the propaganda in song and verse that fueled the fiery passion that burned against the Demon Rum. It is all here. Where else are you likely to get the chance to read that masterpiece of sexual blackmail, "Lips That Touch Liquor Must Never Touch Mine" in its entirety? Or be introduced to this classic of its kind?

A stands for Alcohol, deathlike its grip;
B for Beginner, who takes just a sip;
C for Companion, who urges him on;
D for Demon of Drink that is born;

And so on, right through the alphabet; to:

W for Waning of life that's soon done;
X for his exit regretted by none.
Youth of this nation, such weakness is crime;
Zealously turn from the tempter in time.

Delighted? I was, perversely, at this and the countless other such gems of the genre included in the book. Connoisseurs of bad verse—those of you out there with the crooked smiles who treasure that compendium of poetic horrors, *The Stuffed Owl*—will love *The Well-Tempered Lyre* and probably want to put it up on the same shelf.

The good thing is that, enthusiastic though he is for the monstrous collection of kitsch he has assembled here, Ewing makes no excessive claims for it. He may sometimes seem sly and ambiguous regarding his material, but he is fundamentally the critic and scholar when it comes to judging the worth of it all:

> Temperance verse, like the movement that produced it, is a multiform and many-colored matter but the thousands of samples exhibiting every aspect of the campaign—the good and the bad, the early and the late, the famous and the obscure—pretty well confirm what one may have expected: the movement produced no great poetry, and the best of it can be more justly compared to the second- and third-rate popular verse of its day than to the work of major writers.

Well and honestly put—but he also manages to convince us that these artifacts, as he calls them, are well worth our attention as objects of "social and literary history." And as such quite important: "The temperance crusade did not bring about a war as did the abolition movement, but in later years its effects were almost as far-reaching."

But how wrong to talk of temperance when nothing less than total abstinence was what they demanded! Ewing, of course, is quite keenly aware of this discrepancy and discusses the curious devolution of meaning that took it from moderation to prohibition. Temperance became a battle cry, and the crusade it stood for took over Protestantism in America so completely that it came to seem that Moses came down from the mountain with but one command—thou shalt not imbibe alcohol—and that all the rest was so much *pilpel*. This misplaced

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emphasis seriously weakened Protestantism, dissipated its powerful energy so that now, nearly half a century after the battle was finally fought and lost, the Protestant faith shows no signs of recovering the strength described by Sandra Sizer in her book. It was an early example of one-issue politics, one-issue religion—and oh, the harm that it did! Right-to-Lifers, take note.

Self-images & sentimental excuses

THE GENERATION OF 1914

Robert Wohl
Harvard University Press, $17.50, 307 pp.

Mark Taylor

SOME HISTORIANS seek to clarify history by representing it as the record of struggle—between nations or ideas, for example, or social classes. There are other historians, called generationalists, who believe history can best be understood as a series of collisions between one generation and the next, or the prior, where children reject, modify, or overturn, or more rarely approve, codify, and re-energize the works of their parents. For such historians a man's most authentic brothers are those with whom he is united, not by language, religion, ideological aspiration, or class, but by age-group. According to such a view, as Robert Wohl writes in his fascinating study *The Generation of 1914*, "Date of birth . . . is destiny. The truest community to which one can belong is that defined by age and experience." The second term is as important as the first; members of a generation become so through self-consciousness, through the feeling that they share something that sets them apart.

"What is essential to the formation of a generational consciousness," Professor Wohl continues, "is some common frame of reference that provides a sense of rupture with the past and that will later distinguish the members of the generation from those who follow them in time." For millions of Europeans born between roughly 1870 and 1900, the Great War was this common frame of reference that lent them their generational cohesiveness. They themselves insisted on the common identity that participation in the terrible conflict gave them, and on their difference from others, and they named themselves—so effectively that anyone reflecting for a moment on Mr. Wohl's title will know exactly who is meant and might go on, as Mr. Wohl invites him to do on the first page, to "close your eyes [while] a host of images leaps to mind: of students packing off to war with flowers in their rifles and patriotic songs on their lips, too young, too innocent to suspect what bloody rites of passage awaited them" and other evocative images that have become equally traditional. But are these images all correct, and does the term "generation of 1914" mean as much as we think it means, and does it mean it as consistently, forcefully, and helpfully as we think? Mr. Wohl's purpose in writing was "to rescue the generation of 1914 from the shadowland of myth and to restore it to the realm of history"; having done so, he concludes reluctantly that the more closely one looks at this generation, the more fragmented it becomes and the more the term "generation of 1914" tends to disappear as the significant designation of a single unit.

Mr. Wohl's book examines both important contributions to generational theory and the real evidence available for such theory. In France, for example, two years after the war ended the sociologist François Mentré published *Les Générations Sociales*, dedicated "to the new youth." "A social generation was the product of a spiritual transformation," is Mentré's view, and such a transformation "took place regularly within the minds and hearts of adolescents and young men." Mentré concluded, like many before him, that a generation lasts about thirty years. Yet Professor Wohl argues convincingly for such different emphases among Mentré's own approximate contemporaries that it is possible to differentiate easily among three groups or separate "war generations." The first,

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which included Henri Barbusse (b. 1873) and Maurice Genevoix (b. 1890), consisted of men who had been established when war broke out, or nearly so, and who learned "that war was hell, but . . . considered *this* war just" action against "the intolerable German menace."

The second group contained slightly younger men, like André Breton (b. 1896), who were just beginning in adult life when the war started and who "saw the war not as a sacrifice for which they had prepared but as a thunderbolt that had struck them down or an earthquake that had swept the ground from underneath them as they ventured out into adult life." The third group was young men born about 1900, or as little as a decade after Genevoix, who never got to serve in the war; they "had accepted the idea of their own death and were surprised and disoriented when the war ended . . . and they suddenly found themselves with lives to lead and careers to make in a world filled with shattered illusions." Each of these three positions is, moreover, a distillation of the views of a few literary intellectuals, none of whom—not all of whom—can fairly be taken as ever speaking for all of French youth.

And France was only one of the belligerents in the Great War. Elsewhere the situation was somewhat different. The English myth of the Great War, which Mr. Wohl nicely summarizes, has persisted remarkably: though England lost fewer men both absolutely and proportionately than France or Germany, it lost the best and the brightest, those young members of the governing class fresh from Oxford, Cambridge, and the public schools, who had they not been slain, would have gone on to rule and maintain the Empire. In their absence the old and the second-rate dithered about, allowing for another European conflagration that would transform England into an inferior nation. Thus, the English generation of 1914 is the "lost" generation—"lost" in the sense of "missing," no longer there after 1918. It is true that England's junior officers did represent a social elite, and it is true also that their losses were especially horrific for their numbers; and yet the vast majority even of this elite survived, and by no demonstrable means its less intellectually capable members. (In 1911 there were 155 males between twenty and forty per thousand of the population in England; in 1921 there were 141).

Still, we have the myth of a slain generation—virtually *all* the best men of a certain age—a myth contributed to no more by Rupert Brooke (from the beginning the very type of the brilliant and romantic idealists whom England lost) than by Wilfred Owen, whose "Anthem for Doomed Youth" remains a document in its formation. Mr. Wohl suggests, ironically, that however much the war poets did to invent the myth of the generation of 1914, it was largely perpetuated by the survivors, the majority who did not end up "missing." He argues plausibly that "the myth of the missing generation provided an important self-image for the survivors from within the educated elite and a psychologically satisfying and perhaps even necessary explanation of what happened to them after they returned from the war. The cult of the dead became a means of accounting for the disappointments of the present." The privileged world of Edwardian England was done for, war or no war, by "the broadening of access to political power, the growth of government bureaucracy and the welfare state, the emergence of organized business and labor"; blaming its loss on the illusory destruction of a generation who could not have saved it is

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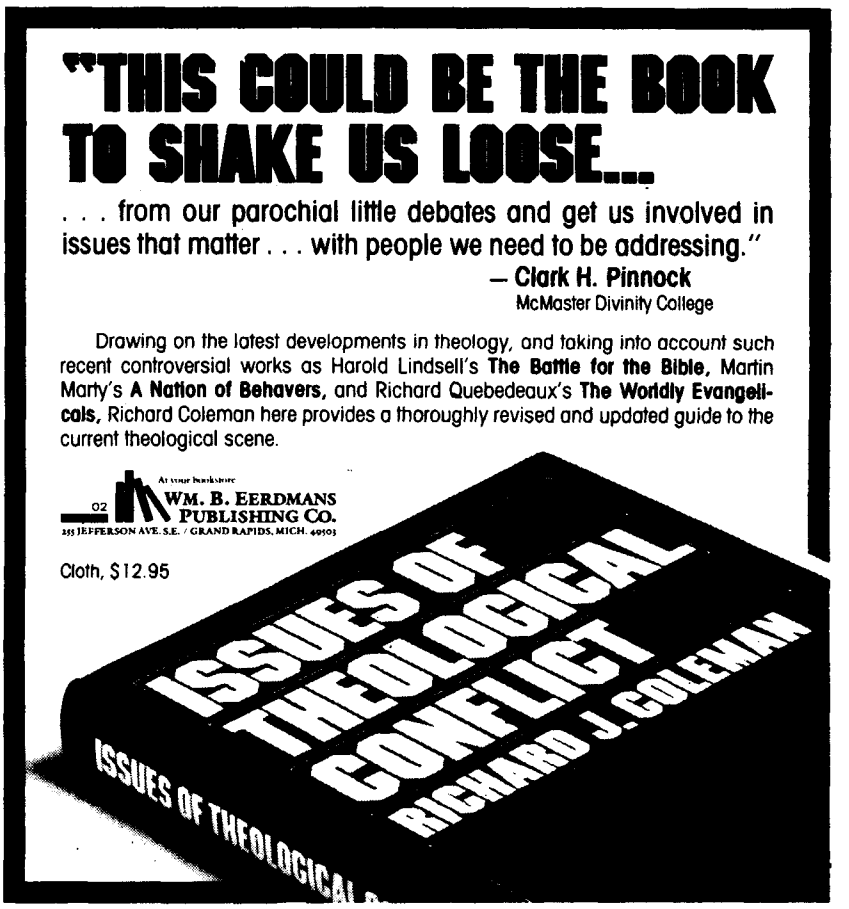
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a sentimental excuse for impotency by those who are unadaptable. Mr. Wohl concludes his section on England in *The Generation of 1914*—a work of extraordinary research, organization, and understanding—thus: "The English generation of 1914 blamed the loss of their world on the war; but the truth was that Ithaca had begun to change long before they had embarked for Troy."

Tracking the mystic pilgrim

KARMA COLA:
MARKETING THE MYSTIC EAST

Gita Mehta

Simon & Schuster, $9.95, 201 pp.

ALTERNATIVE ALTARS:
UNCONVENTIONAL AND EASTERN SPIRITUALITY IN AMERICA

Robert S. Ellwood, Jr.

University of Chicago Press, $12.95, 192 pp.

David Steindl-Rast and Francis V. Tiso

GITA MEHTA'S *Karma Cola* is a collection of anecdotes portraying the sickening consequences of unholy cultural mixtures. It is *not* a book about the assimilation of Eastern religions into the American scene (in spite of the misleading and offensive jacket design). Rather, it is a portrait gallery of Europeans and Americans choking in the quagmire of modern India. Mehta's characters went to India on the "quest for enlightenment" of one sort or another; in her view, the quest has led all too often to moral disaster and the corruption of a nation ripe for infection.

Karma Cola has in it material from which Chaucer, Boccaccio or Dante could have woven great literature. The difference between Mehta and these Western writers is in her astonishing lack of compassion. Her book fails as literature because it does violence to the humanity it describes, or rather, exploits. The intent of the book is never really clear to the reader, but if it means to entertain us, then it is our worst selves that will find it funny. In telling us about the dark side of religiosity, our propensity to abuse and exploit everything, *Karma Cola* is itself an example of the perverse inclination to make that which is sacred the victim of the grossest vulgarization.

Do not look to *Karma Cola* for insights into the "decline of the West" or for a diagnosis of our spiritual malaise. Mehta has instead given the West a way out. Conventional religion remains safe and sound from ritual murder, ritual sex and ritual ecstasy. Our well-scrubbed children may continue to be taught a laundered gospel; our bodies, too, may move as little as possible, tagging along behind our minds.

After Mehta's nightmares, we come into the relatively ordered world of Robert Ellwood's *Alternative Altars*, an attempt to make sense of the American propensity to generate new religious paths on which seekers since the earliest days of the republic have ventured forth. One cannot help wondering if Ellwood's heroes and heroines, in spite of their besetting vices, have any relation at all to the mass of misfits and discontents who ravage and are ravaged by the "mystic East" of *Karma Cola*.

Ellwood does the scholar's labor of describing the psychology and social structure of "the different ones," a permanent group of Americans who comprise the shifting membership of "excursus religion" in North American culture. The "different ones" are described as living "for a long time protean in lifestyle, alienated, and involved in cults, communes, self-actualization techniques, and esoteric worldviews." (pg. 10) The question of deep conversion, or a "radical reorganization of identity" does not arise; rather, episodic involvements with new groups are regarded *in advance* as "just another opportunity to 'grow,' " even if the new groups turn out to be a hoax (ibid.). Here we begin to glimpse some of the discouragement that often hovers near despair in this population of young persons. Ellwood's powers of insight might have shed more light on the breakage and psychological dislocation that is the tragic side of the spiritual quest in the West today. The very fact that the "different ones" are alienated from both secular society and normative religions should signal the depths of vulnerability and loneliness experienced by these persons. Ellwood tends to neglect the darker side of the subgroup he describes, seeking his paradigms in a series of exciting biographies of the heroes and heroines of excursus religion.

Ellwood's approach is a useful application of social science methodology, but we might have hoped for greater balance in the chapter on "Inner Worlds: The Psychology of Excursus Religion." It should be possible to appreciate the radical subjectivity, indeed the unfathomable mystery, of the religious seeker, without shying away from the evident maladies of non-commitment on the one hand, and exploitative enthrallment on the other.

The second half of the book is an application of the tools of research to the experience of three "moments" in the history of American excursus religion: Shakers and Spiritualists in the mid-nineteenth century; the voyage of the Theosophists Olcott and Blavatsky to India in 1879; and the movement of Zen into the United States since the turn of the century, with emphasis on the post-World War II phase. The reader is swept along by the author's sense of excitement and openness to the histories he relates.

There is an undeniable dynamism in these chapters which can be attributed to the weaving of the biographical strands of the story with an appreciation of the surprisingly broad social impact of excursus religion. We learn, for example, that the Theosophists' journey to India influenced both the Irish and Indian independence movements. "Quaint as the mission . . . may sound to some, it . . . was a destiny-fraught sign of a rising undertow . . ., a reverse process which would not stop until independence had come again to the East and the West was awash with yoga and chanting."

Ellwood breaks important ground in his recognition that the symbols and methodology of *any* imported religion do

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not remain untouched by the experience of America. One could give examples from Zen to Catholicism. In the words of Jose Arguelles in *The Transformative Vision*: "The vision of what we are to become is already within us, awaiting the proper discipline through which it might be appropriately expressed" (pg. 280).

It has been the personal search for that discipline on American soil by such men and women as Mother Ann Lee, Soyen Shaku, Madame Blavatsky, Henry David Thoreau, and Gary Snyder, that has given form to one of our most enduring myths: the ideal of the wandering, alienated scholar-mystic who seems to catch the energy of the land itself, altering any foreign symbology toward a self-renewing vision of the eternal magic which is in all of us. In both *Karma Cola* and *Alternative Altars* we are on the track of this mythic pilgrim whose spell may touch many readers.

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In Brief

GRITTY CITIES: A SECOND LOOK AT ALLENTOWN, BETHLEHEM, BRIDGEPORT, HOBOKEN, LANCASTER, NORWICH, PATERSON, READING, TRENTON, TROY, WATERBURY, WILMINGTON, *by Mary Proctor and Bill Matuszeski, Temple University Press, $17.50 cloth, $9.95 paper, 271 pp.*

The recent and perhaps too late agreement among some city planners and architecture writers during the last decades that "urban renewal"—which couldn't tell the difference between a neighborhood and a slum—did more harm than good, and that the best way to "save" a city's character was to preserve or recycle its distinctive old buildings—court houses, railroad stations and abandoned mills—has inspired a good number of handsome and clever picture books about cities yearning to be preserved, but very little good writing about the character and history of the cities themselves.

Gritty Cities is an affectionate and modest consideration of 12 old industrial communities with true grit, a rugged determination that even though the factories that gave them life, prosperity and identity a century ago may have moved or closed, they will forge new identities not by emulating the big cities but by building on those things—canals, parks, neighborhoods—that gave them unique character in the first place.

There are some striking pictures: the Waterbury McKim, Mead and White (1908) Railroad Station modeled (the authors neglect to note) on the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence; the Great Falls of Paterson and the mills below them (though the authors say nothing of the William Carlos Williams's poem); the beautiful balustrades, fire escapes and brownstones of Hoboken, New Jersey.

Anyone who loves these cities—I have visited half and grew up in Trenton—will like this book and wish it were longer and better. Their too-brief sketches of each city (5 pp!!) are as strong or weak as their sources; the maps, black and white reproductions of U.S. Geological color maps, are unreadable and useless for the purposes of the book. And who will forgive them for not including a picture of the great bridge sign beloved by anyone who has crossed the Delaware at New Jersey's capital: "TRENTON MAKES, THE WORLD TAKES"?

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Correspondence

(Continued from page 418)

matism.

Our problems are not easy to solve but they will never be if we surrender our individual efforts to reach solutions to the elite. A twelve-hour day of heavy work in the last century gave little time for our forebears to ponder the decisions needed but they at least were avid readers of the press and classics and knew that their future was not in the hands of absent authoritarian figures but rather lay in group response based on thoughtfulness and morality.

Personal experience during the past twenty years in several forms of group action seems to sustain the hope that many, especially the younger members, are not about to give over to some self-anointed spokesmen the direction of either their lives or the life of their nation.

L. J. NAUGHTON

Andersonville

Saxtons River, Vt.

To the Editors: Your editorial "A Chance For Anderson?" [May 23] is invigorating now when we are numbed close to despair by an officialdom which acts hell bent to "let slip the dogs of war."

If John Anderson could get Senator Mark Hatfield for vice-presidential running mate, or another "most able" man or woman with wit to know that MX, vengeance, poisoned earth, atmosphere and outer space do not create security, then election day could offer a chance to choose life and get about the work of civilized living. MARJORIE MURPHY

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THIS AUGUST 1 ISSUE offers a good sample of the scope and quality of the interpretive comment *Commonweal* provides in issue after issue. And the following list of recently published articles throws further light on what the magazine consistently brings to its subscribers:

Religion: Ernest W. Ranly, "Questions for the Pope" . . . John L. McKenzie, "Jesus and Divorce" . . . The Editors, "The Manufacture of Life" . . . David K. O'Rourke, "Liturgy and the Individual" . . . Stanley Hauerwas and Robert Wilken, "Protestants and John Paul II" . . . The Editors, "The Drinan Dilemma" . . . Peter Chirico, "Gospel, Infallibility and Küng" . . .

Public Affairs: J. Patrick Dobel, "Let the Russians Do It" . . . Richard B. DuBoff, "The New Conservative Economics" . . . The Editors, "Our Urban Volcanos" . . . David Riesman, "The Overriding Issue: Nuclear Catastrophe" . . . Pope McCorkle, "The Election — more than incompetence vs. stupidity" . . . Denis Goulet and Robert Wasserstrom, "Brazil" . . . The Editors, " 'Winning' a Nuclear War?" . . .

Literature and the Arts: Dennis O'Brien, "Sartre, the Man Who Said No" . . . Nicolaus Mills, "The American Luminists" . . . John C. Cort, "My Life at the Catholic Worker" . . . J.M. Cameron, "The Idea of a Liberal Education" . . . Diana Cooper-Clark, An Interview with Mary Gordon . . . John Garvey, "The Voice of Blume" . . . Gregory Baum, "Peter Berger's Unfinished Symphony" . . . Maureen Mullarkey, "Miriam Schapiro's 'Femmage' " . . .

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